CONFIRMATION
AND
RESTAURATION,
The neceſſary means of
REFORMATION,
And
RECONCILIATION;
For the Healing of the Corruptions and Diviſions of the Churches:

Submiſſively, but earneſtly tendered to the Conſideration of the Soveraigne Powers, Magiſtrates, Miniſters, and People, that they may awake, and be up and doing in the Execution of ſo much, as appeareth to be neceſſary as they are true to Chriſt, his Church and Goſpel, and to their own and others Souls, and to the Peace and wellfare of the Nations; and as they will anſwer the neglect to Chriſt, at their Peril.

By *Richard Baxter*, an unworthy Miniſter of Chriſt, that longeth to ſee the Healing of the Churches.

Iſa. 44.3,4,5. *For I will pour water on him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit on thy ſeed, and my Bleſſing upon thine Offſpring, and they ſhall ſpring as among the graſs, as willows by the water-courſes. One ſhall ſay*, I am the Lords, *and another ſhall call himſelf by the name of* Jacob; *and another ſhall* Subſcribe with his hand unto the Lord, *and ſurname himſelf by the name of* Iſrael.

London, Printed by *A. M.* for *Nevil Simmons*, Bookſeller in *Kederminſter*, and are to be ſold by him there, and *N. Ekins* at the *Gun* in in *Pauls* Church-yard. 1658.

TO THE READER.

Christian Reader;

HAving in divers writings, moved for the Restitution of a solemn Transition, of all that pass from an Infant-state of Church-membership, into the number of the Adult, and are admitted

to their Priviledges, and the Aſſociated Miniſters of this County, having made it an Article of their Agreement, at laſt came forth an excellent Exercitation on Confirmation, written by Mr. *Jonathan Hammer*, very learnedly and piouſly, endeavouring the Reſtoration of this Practice. Being very glad of ſo good a work, upon an invitation, I prefixed an Epiſtle before it; which hath occaſioned this following

lowing Disputation. For when the Book was read, the designe was Generally approved, (as farre as I can learne) and very acceptable to good men of all parties. But many of them called to me, to try whether some more Scripture proofes might not be brought for it, that the *Preceptive*, as well as the *Mediate* Necessity might appeare. At the desire of some Reverend Godly Brethren, I hastily

drew up this which is here offered you; 1. Partly to satisfie them in the point of Scripture Evidence; 2. But principally to satisfie my own earnest desires, after the Reformation, and Healing of thē Churches, to which I do very confidently apprehend, this excellent work to have a singular tendencie. Here is a Medicine so effectual to Heale our Breaches, and set our disordered Societies

cieties in joynt, (being owned in whole by the *Epiſcopall*, *Presbyterian*, *Congregational*, and *Eraſtian*, and in half, by the *Anabaptiſts*) that nothing but our own ſelf-conceitedneſs; perverſneſs, lazyneſs, or wilfull enmity to the Peace of the Churches, is able to deprive us of a bleſſed ſucceſs. But alas, our minds are the Subjects of the diſeaſe; and are ſo alienated, exulcerated, and ſo ſelf-

iſhly

iſhly partial and uncharitable, that when the Plaſter is offered us, and Peace brought to our doors, I muſt needs expect that many ſhould pieviſhly caſt it away, and others betray it, by a lazy commendation, and ſo diſable the few that would be faithfull, practical, and induſtrious, from that General ſucceſs, which is ſo neceſſary and deſirable.

As for them that lay all our

our Peace on *Epiſcopacy*, and *Liturgie*, I intend if God will, to ſend them after this, ſome Healing motions on thoſe ſubjects alſo. And if they have no better ſucceſs, than preſently to ſatisfy my own Conſcience, in the faithfull performance of ſo great a duty, and to awaken the Deſires, Endeavours and Praiers of the more moderate and Impartial, I ſhall not think my labour loſt, Pray for the Peace

of

of *Jeruſalem*; they ſhall proſper that love it. Let's ſeeke it of God, as well as men; which is the daily, though too defective practiſe, of

The moſt unworthy Servant of the King of Peace,

April 7. 1658. R. BAXTER.

To the Reader.

If Magistrates or others, who are obliged to promote the worke, which is here commended to them, do want leisure, or patience to read the whole, I desire them to peruse these following Contents, and those parts of the Work, in which they are most unsatisfied.

THE CONTENTS.

QUESTION.

WHether those that were Baptized in Infancy, should be admitted to the Priviledges proper to Adult Church-members, without Confirmation, or Restauration, by an Approved Profession of personal Faith and Repentance? Neg.

A general Rule to guide Reformers.

PROP. I. *It is supposed, that the Infants of Believers should be admitted by Baptism into the Church, and so be partakers of Infant-priviledges. A Breviate*

Breviate of Reaſons for this.

PROP. II. *There are many Priviledges belonging to the Adult-members of the Church, which Infant-members are not capable of.*

PROP. III. *The Continuation of Priviledges received in Infancy, is part of the Priviledges of the Adult: or the Reſtoration of them, if they be loſt.*

PROP. IV. *The Title-Condition of Infant Church-memberſhip, and Priviledges is not the ſame with the Title-Condition of the Church-memberſhip and Priviledges of the Adult; ſo that if this new Condition be not performed, when men come to age, their former Title ceaſeth, and there is no other, that ariſeth in its ſtead: Proved.*

PROP. V. *As a Perſonal faith is the Condition, before God, of Title to the Priviledges of the Adult; ſo the Profeſſion of this Faith, is the Condition*

tion of his Title before the Church, and without this Profession, he is not to be taken as an Adult-member, nor admitted to the Priviledges of such. Proved, and Vindicated from their Objections, that plead against the necessity of an expres Profession: with some Application urging to the practice.

PROP. VI. *It is not every kind of Profession that is the Condition, or necessary qualification of those, that are to be admitted to the Priviledges of Adult-members, but such a Profession, as God hath made necessary by his expres Word, and by the nature of the Object, and the uses and ends, to which he doth require it. It must be a Profession of True Christianity in all the Essentials. What are the Essentials, as to Objects and Acts: It must be a* Credible Profession. 1. *It must seeme to be Understanding.* 2. *And serious.* 3. *And voluntary, upon deliberation.*

4. *Not nullified by a contradiction in word or deed.* 5. *It must be Practice first, that must make words Credible, when the person by perfidiousness hath forfeited his credit.*

PROP. VII. *The Profession of those that expect the Church-state and Priviledges of the Adult, is to be tryed, judged and approved, by the Pastours of the Church, to whose Office it is that it belongeth.* 1. *An untryed Profession must not serve: proved.* 2. *Pastours by Office are the Tryers and Judges, of the Profession of such, as to these Ends: proved by* 14 *undenyable Arguments; and Objections Answered. Consent of the Ancients.*

PROP. VIII. *Though it belong to the Pastours Office to Judge of the Profession of such expectants, yet are they bound up by the Laws of Christ what Profession to accept, and what to refuse: and if by breaking these Laws, they*

they shall dangerously or grosly wrong the Church, it belongeth to the Magistrate to correct them, and to the people to admonish them, and disown their sin; yea and in desperate cases to disown them. The Positive Title-condition to be produced, is The Profession of true Christianity. *The Minister that refuseth this Profession, must prove it* not credible. *Of tolerable ignorance.*

PROP. IX. *It is evident that Magistrates, Ministers and people, have each a power of Judging: but different, as they have different works. How far Ministers are Judges. Proved by ten Reasons, against the popular claim, &c. How far the people must Judge: How far the Magistrate must Judge Ministers for these Matters, and Ministers obey them?*

PROP. X. *To this Ministerial Approbation of the Profession and Qualifications of the Expectant, there is to be ad-*

joyned a Miniſterial Inveſtiture *or Delivery of the Benefit expected. How many Sacraments there are.* 1. *More than ſeaven in the largeſt ſenſe.* 2. *Five in a large ſenſe (not intollerable.)* 3. *Two only in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, as we define them.*

PROP. XI. *The ſolemn Miniſterial* Inveſtiture *of Profeſſours into the right of the Church-Priviledges of the Adult, is either* 1. *Of the* Unbaptized, *who are now firſt entred.* 2. *Or of the* Baptized *in Infancy, that never proved ungodly, nor violated that firſt Covenant.* 3. *Or of thoſe Baptized (whether in Infancy or at Age) that have ſince proved wicked and broke the Covenant. The firſt of theſe* Inveſtitures *is to be by* Baptiſm; *the ſecond by* Confirmation, *and the third by* Abſolution. *So that the ſolemn* Inveſtiture *that now I am pleading for, is by* Confirmation *to one ſort, (that never proved ungodly ſince their Baptiſm) and by* Abſolution *to the other ſort (that broke*

broke their Covenant) which yet hath a certain Confirmation *in, or with it.*

PROP. XII. *This ſolemn* Inveſtiture *on perſonal Profeſsion, being thus proved the Ordinance of God, for the ſolemn renewing the Covenant of Grace, between God and the Adult-Covenanter, it muſt needs follow that it is a* Corroborating *Ordinance, and that* Corroborating *Grace is to be expepectedin it from God, by all that come to it in ſincerity of heart: And ſo it hath the name of Confirmation upon that account alſo.*

PROP. XIII. *Miniſterial* Impoſition of hands, *in* Confirmation *and the foredeſcribed ſort of* Abſolution, *is a Lawfull and Convenient action, or Ceremony, and ordinarily to be uſed, as it hath been of old by the Univerſal Church. But yet it is not of ſuch Neceſsity, but that we*

muſt diſpence in this Ceremony with ſcrupulous Conſciences, that cannot be ſatiſfied to ſubmit to it: Impoſition of hands is allowed in Scripture to be uſed Generally by Spiritual Superiours, *to ſignifie their Deſire, that the Bleſsing, Guift or Power, may be conferred on the Inferiour, for which they have a call to mediate. Proved. Particllarly,* 1. *We find in Scripture a Bleſsing of Church-members, with laying on of hands.* 2. *And that the Holy Ghoſt is in a ſpecial manner promiſed to Believers, over and above that meaſure of the Spirit, which cauſed them to Believe.* 3. *And that Praier, with laying on of hands, was the outward means to be uſed by Chriſts Miniſters, for procuring this, or inveſting them of it.* 4. *And that this was not a temporary, but fixed Ordinance. All proved.* How *the Holy Ghoſt is given* before Faith, *and after Faith, and how ſealed in Baptiſm, and how not? What Hope of the ſucceſs of Impoſition, with Praier for*

for the ſpirit. Scripture and Antiquity for it. Reaſons for the non-neceſsity of it to the the ſcrupulous.

PROP. XIV. *Though in receiving Adult-perſons out of Infidelity by Baptiſm into the Church; a ſudden Profeſsion, without any ſtay to ſee their Reformation, may ſerve turne, yet in receiving theſe that were Baptized heretofore, into the number of Adult-members, or to the Priviledges of ſuch, their lives muſt be enquired after, which muſt be ſuch as do not confute their Profeſsion.*

PROP. XV. *It is not of flat Neceſsity, that the Profeſsion of the Expectant be made in the open Congregation, or before many, in order to his Confirmation or admittance.*

PROP. XVI. *When a perſon is admitted an Adult-member of a particular Church, as well as of the Univerſal, his Profeſsion and Admiſsion muſt be either before the Church, or ſatisfactorily*

storily made known to the Church, at least, who must approve of it by a Judgment of discretion, in order to their Communion with him: and this among us is the ordinary case; because it is the duty of all, that have opportunity to joyne themselves to some particu- Church, and it is in such Churches, that Communion in publique Worship and order must be had, either statedly, or transiently and temporarily. Reasons to prove this Interest of the People. Cases of difference between Pastours and people resolved.

PROP. XVII. *It is convenient (though not of necessity) that every Church do keep a Register of all that are thus Invested, or admitted into the number of Adult-members.*

PROP. XVIII. *Those that were never thus Ministerially and Explicitly Approved, Confirmed, or Absolved (after an ungodly life) but have been permitted without it, to joyne usually with the*

the Church in prayer and praiſes, and the Lords Supper, are Approved and Confirmed, eminently, though not formally, though in ſo doing, both the Paſtours and themſelves might ſinne againſt God, by the violation of his holy order. Such therefore may be a true Church, and are not to be called back to ſolemn Confirmation, though in many caſes they may be called to Tryall by their Overſeers.

PROP. XIX. *So exceeding great and many are the Miſchiefs that have befallen us by the neglect of a ſolemn meet Tranſition from an Infant into the Adult Church-ſtate, and which undoubtedly will continue till this be remedied, that all the Magiſtrates, Miniſters & people, that diſſemble not in profeſſing themſelves to be Chriſtians, ſhould with ſpeed and diligence attempt the cure. The ſtate of our Pariſhes anatomized. Twenty intollerable miſchiefs, that follow the taking all into our Church-communion,*

and

and neglecting this Confirmation: ſuch as all Chriſtians ſhould lay to heart.

PROP. XX. *So many and great are the Benefits that would follow the generall practice of this duty of trying, approving and confirming (or Abſolving) all thoſe that enter into the number of Adult-Chriſtians, that it ſhould mightily provoke all Chriſtian Magiſtrates, Miniſters, and people to joyne in a ſpeedy and vigorous execution of it. Twelve excellent Benefits that will come by Confirmation. It's like to be an admirable increaſer of knowledg, and holineſs, and Church-Reformation. It's a ſingular means of Agreeing the Epiſcopal, Presbyterians, Congregational, Eraſtians, and moderating the Anabaptiſts: proved and urged.*

Twenty Objections againſt this Approved Profeſsion and Confirmation, anſwered. How little reaſon have Princes, and Parliaments to reſtraine moſt Miniſters here from overdoing.

The

The Duties that lie upon us all, for the Execution of this Work: and 1. *on Ministers.* 1. *We should Agree upon an unanimous performance.* 2. *In those Agreements, we must leave men to their Liberty in all unnecessary modes, and circumstances.* 3. *In taking mens profession, we must avoid both extreams,* viz. *Loose formality, and overmuch* 4. *What course must be taken with all our Parishe, where some have without a Personal Approved Profession already been admitted to the Lords Supper and some not particularly opened?* 5. *We must require of all the notoriously ungodly, a Penitent Confession in order to Absolution, as well as a Profession of Faith, and future obedience.* 6. *Delegates to be chosen by particular Churches, to meet with the Pastours for these and other Church-affaires.* 7. *The Pastours and Churches should be all Associated, and the Churches that we hold Communion with, differenced from the rest: that those that are Confirmed*

firmed and Received by them, may be capable of Communion with all. 8. *We must be diligent in publike and private Teaching the Catechumens, and walk inoffensively, condescendingly and vigilantly among them.*

2. *The Duty of the People, especially the Godly, in order to this Work.*

3. *The Magistrates Duty hereto.* 1. *To cause those People that are unfit for Church-Communion, to live quietly in the state of Expectants, and to submit to publique and personal Instruction, and Catechizing, to prepare them.* 2. *To compel Ministers thus to Teach and Catechize them, and see that great Parishes have so many Teachers as may be able to do it. Reasons for compelling us.* 3. *To lay some penalty on all Pastors, that will not guide the Church by Discipline, as well as preach: Not forbidding them to be Preachers, but to be Pastours and administer Sacraments, that will not do it, as Christ hath appointed. To these ends*

ends it may do well, for the Magiſtrate to have his Agent or Church-Juſtice to joyne in the Church-meetings, and to inform the Commiſsioners for Ejection, who may be impowred hereunto. 4. *To promote and command the Aſsociations and correſpondencies of Paſtours and Churches. With what limitations, and to what ends.* 5. *It would much further this Work, if Viſitours were appointed in all parts to ſee it done, or put on Miniſters: Not that any Miniſters ſhould have a Power of ſilencing, ſuſpending,* &c. *But to let a Civil Viſitor, and a Viſitor of the Miniſtry be ſtill joyned together, and let the Miniſter have only a power to perſwade, and the other as a Magiſtrate to compell, or to bring the cauſes, which are exempt from his power, to the Superiour Commiſsioners.* 6. *It's the unqueſtionable Duty of Magiſtrates (not to drive men to Church-Communion that are unmeet, but) to reſtraine Seducers, from taking advantage of*

their

their diſcontents and drawing them away, while they remaine Expectants: Ten Reaſons, that deſerve the ſerious conſideration of the Magiſtrate, that ſhew the great Neceſsity of this his Moderate aſsiſtance, for keeping of deceivers, eſpecially Papiſts, and containing the prophane and ignorant people in quietneſs and ſubmiſsion to inſtruction in an expectant ſtate till they are fit for Church-Communion.

7. To ſatisfie the Magiſtrate that is afraid of perſecution, certain Regulations of Toleration are propounded.

1. Let all that pretend ſcruple of ſubmitting to the perſonal or publique Inſtruction of the Teacher of the Pariſh where he lives, be compelled to ſubmit to ſome one elſe, who may give it under his hand that he takes that care of him. 2. Let Commiſsioners be appointed (according to the Laws given them) to guard the door of Toleration, as now they are to guard the door of publique Allowance and Maintenance: and let

none

none be Tolerated to preach or openly perſwade (though for nothing) that have not an Inſtrument of Licence ſealed by theſe Commiſsioners: Or elſe Blaſphemers and Heathens may preach for all your Laws againſt them. 3. *Let thoſe that have a ſealed Toleration be as reſponſible to the Commiſsioners, for their violating the Laws of their Toleration, as we are for breaking the Laws that bind us: and let their Toleration be forfeitable, as well as our Maintenance. Reaſons for this. To conclude, if as before the daies of* William *the Conquerour, Magiſtrates and Miniſters might ſit together, the Miniſters having no power but to perſwade, and the Magiſtrate the ſole power of Compulſion, and ſo* 1. *Approvers keep the door of Toleration.* 2. *A Church Juſtice, or Agent of the Magiſtrates keep the peace of every Church, or Pariſh.* 3. *And the Civil and Miniſterial Viſiters aforeſaid ſhall be appointed to take Cogniſance of the ſtate of Pariſhes.*

Parishes. 4. *And the Commissioners for Ejection of scandalous Ministers, be equally enabled to eject the scandalous and blasphemous from their Toleration; the Magistrate might assist us without danger of persecution.*

CONFIR-

CONFIRMATION AND RESTAURATION

The neceſſary means of

REFORMATION

And

RECONCILIATION.

Queſt. *Whether thoſe that were Baptized in Infancy, ſhould be admitted to the Priviledges proper to Adult Church-members, without* Confirmation, *or* Reſtauration, *by an* Approved Profeſſion *of* Perſonal Faith *and* Repentance? *Neg.*

THough the diſtempers of the Churches of Chriſt in *England*, are not ſo great as the Popiſh adverſaries, or ſome diſcontented Brethren do pretend, nor as ſome inconſiderate lamenters of our condi-

tion do imagine, who obſerve leſs our enjoyments then our wants, and that have not the faculty of diſcerning our true Agreements, where there is any difference, but think that many things are wanting that are not, becauſe they cannot find them: Yet is our diſcompoſure ſuch as the wiſeſt have cauſe to mourn for, and all of us ſhould contribute our endeavours to redreſs. And for the accompliſhment of this bleſſed Work, two things muſt be done: The firſt is, to Diſcover the Principles that muſt Reform and heal us, if ever we be healed; and to acquaint the world with the neceſſary means. The ſecond is, to concur for the execution, in the application and uſe of the Remedie, when it is diſcovered. The firſt is a work, that is uſually done beſt by a few at firſt: Though the more Receive and Approve of the diſcovery, the better it will be brought into uſe. But it's here, ſaith *Pemble*, as in diſcerning a thing a farre off, where one clear eye will ſee further then many that are dimme, and the greateſt conjunction of unfurniſhed intellects affords not ſo much aſſiſtance for the Diſcovery, as the greater ſight of a few may do. But in the executive part, there muſt be many hands to the work. If the Paſtours and people do not conſent, it cannot

not be accompliſhed; and if they barely conſent, and be not up and doing, Diſcoveries will lie dead, and nothing will go on: And if the Chriſtian Magiſtrate afford not his aſſiſtance, his Guilt will be great, and the work will go the more heavily on. Though all the body be not an Eye, and therefore be not as good at Diſcovering as the Eye is; yet muſt each member perform its own office, and none be idle, or withdraw its helpe, becauſe it is not an Eye; but all muſt execute by the Guidance of the Eye.

In order to the Diſcovery of the Healing Meanes, among others, this Rule is worthy our obſervation. *If any Church Order, or adminiſtration ſeem offenſive to you, before you wholly caſt it out, conſider whether there be not ſomewhat that* ☞ *is neceſſary and excellent either in the ſubſtance, or in the Occaſion and Reaſon of it:* and you will find, that *Reformation is to be accompliſhed more by Reſtauration of Ordinances and Adminiſtrations to their Primitive Nature and Uſe, then by the utter Abolition of them.* Satan found it eaſier to *corrupt* the Ordinances of Chriſt, and to cauſe them to degenerate into ſomewhat like them, then to Introduce ſuch of his *own* as were *wholly new*, and as Chriſt had given no Occaſion of. I could give you very uſefull inſtances in

many of the Popish administrations, which require a *Restauration*, rather then an *Abolition*, lest that which is Christ's part, be cast out with that which is mans, and we should throw away the Apple which should be but pared; and lest we cast away our necessary food, and most precious Jewels, because they have fallen into Romish dirt. But my present business is to instance only in *Confirmation* and *Penitence*, so farre as is requisite to the decision of the Question now before us.

I know you will easily excuse me from the needless labour of explaining any terms in the Question which you understand already: I think the best method to lay the matter naked before your understandings, will be by approaches and degrees in the opening and confirming of these Propositions.

Prop. I. *It is here supposed, that the Infants of Believers should by Baptism be admitted into the Church, and so be partakers of Infant Priviledges.*

THeir sinne and misery is come upon them without any actual consent of their own, by the will of others; and the Remedy must be

be applyed to them accordingly, not by any actual consent of their own (which is as impossible) but by the *will of others*, as the *Condition*, and by the *Gift of God* as the *Cause*. In his dealing with mankind; God is not so much more prone to wrath and vengeance then to Mercy, as to put Infants into the *Comminatory* terrible part of the Covenant, with their Parents, and not into the *Remedying* part; and to *condemn* them for their first Fathers *Covenant-breaking*, and give them *no help* from their *gracious* Parents *Covenant-keeping*; and to fetch weight from Parents *sinnes* to weigh down the scale of *Vindictive Justice*, and to put nothing from the gracious Parents into the other end. Yet is it not to Infants as the *meer Natural Issue of godly Parents*, that God extendeth this Grace. But 1. As they are *Naturally their Own*, the Parents have *a Power of them* to dispose of them for their good. 2. Every man that is *Sanctified*, hath *devoted himself*, and in *Generall*, *all that he hath* to God; according to the several capacities of what he hath, that every thing may be for God in its proper Capacity. 3. *Virtually* then the Children of the Godly, even in the wombe are thus Devoted unto God. 4. It is the revealed Will of God, that Infants should

be *Actually Dedicated* and Devoted to him. 5 He that requireth us to make this Dedication, doth imply therein a promise of his Acceptance of what is Dedicated to him by his command. For his precepts are not vain or delusory. 6. He hath also expresly signified this in *Scripture Promises*, extending his Covenant to the seed of the Faithfull, and telling us that his Kingdom is of such. 7. This Dedication is to be made by Baptism, the Ordinance which God hath appointed to that End; and in which he is ready to signifie his Acceptance, that so there may be a mutual solemn Covenant.

The Servants of God before Christ's coming were enabled and required to enter their Infants into the Covenant of God, sometime (and ordinarily) in Circumcision, and sometime (as in the wilderness, *Dent.* 29) without it. And they have the same *Natural Interest*, and as *large a discovery* that *it's the Will of God*, for the *Dedicating* of their Children, to God, and *Choosing* for them, and *entering them into the holy Covenant*, now as then. If *then* a Child that had no exercise of its *own Will*, might by the *Will of his Parents choose the Lord*, and be *entered into Covenant* with him, it is then so still. God hath no where reverst or abrogated that Command, which

which obliged Parents to enter their Children into Covenant with God, and Devote them to him. Nay Christ chid those that would keep them from him, because his Kingdom, that is, his Church, is of such. A place that doth purposely and plainly express the continuance of his Love to Infants, and yet the Gospel entertaineth them as readily as the Law or Promise before did. Oft and again doth Christ signifie to the *Jews* that he would have gathered them wholly to his Church, and not have broken them off, if they had not by unbelief been broken off, and in the same Olive hath he engraffed the Gentile Church. Infants are members of all Commonwealths on the face of the earth, though they know not what a Commonwealth is, nor yet what soveraignty or subjection mean. And he that should say they are no members, because they are Imperfect members, would but be laughed at. And Christ hath not cast them out of his family or Commonwealth, nor shut the door against the[illegible]

And that in this Infant state they are capable of many Priveledges is apparent. They have Original sinne, which must be pardoned, or they are lost. Most of the *Anabaptists* that I hear of, do hold that all the

Infants in the world are pardoned by Christ, and shall be saved if they die in Infancy, and run in the downright *Pelagian* road. But this is not only utterly unproved, but contrary to Scripture, which telleth us, that sinne is not pardoned by the bloodshed of Christ, till men be brought into Union with him, and participation of him; and for all his bloodshed, no man shall have pardon by it, till it be given him by the Act of Pardon in the Gospel. Now the Gospel no where gives out Pardon to every Infant in the world: Nay it frequently and plainly makes a difference. The Parents *will* doth *Accept* the offer, and choose for them that cannot choose for themselves. For others, what ever God will do with them, doubtless they have no promise of Mercy. And it's strange that they should deny Baptism to Infants that deny not Salvation to them, yea that think (though ungroundedly) that they are all in a state of Salvation. For either Infants have Original sinne, or not: If they have none, then they need no Saviour, and must be saved without a Saviour; for the *whole* need not the Physician, but the *sick*. If they have Original sinne, and that it is pardoned to them by Christ, then how can men deny them the sign and seale of pardon,

don, or the ſolemn inveſting means. If they are ſure that they are waſht with Chriſt's Blood, how can they deny to waſh them with that water, that is appointed to ſignifie and inveſt?

Moreover, Infants are capable of many other Priveledges; and of being the Adopted Sonnes of God, the Members of Chriſt, the Heirs of Heaven, as having Right thereto; and being the members of the Church, and being under the Special Protection and Proviſion of God, and in a ſpecial ſort partakers of the Prayers of the Church, with divers more. As in the Commonwealth, an Infant is capable of having Honour and Inheritance in Right, though not Actally to uſe them; and of the protection of the Laws for Life, Reputation and eſtate; and of being Tenant, and obliged to pay a certain Rent and Homage when he comes to age, and in the mean time to have Proviſions from the Eſtate that he hath Title to.

But all this I have fuller expreſt elſewhere: And I have lately read Mr *Tombes*'s laſt and large Reply, to part of my Book, and many others; and muſt needs ſay that it leaves me ſtill perſwaded that it is the will of Chriſt that the Infants of his Servants ſhould be Dedicated to him in Baptiſm, and members of his

his visible Church; and though upon the review of my Arguments I find that I have used too many provoaking words, for which I am heartily sorry, and desire pardon of God and him, yet I must say, that I am left more confident then before, that the cause is Gods which Mr *Tombes* oppoſeth: Of which if God will, I intend yet to give some further account: In the mean time I deal with this but as a Suppoſition that is already sufficiently proved, though all men, yea all good men see not the sufficiency of the proofe.

Prop. 2. *There are many Priviledges belonging to the Adult Members of the Church, which Infant members are not capable of.*

THis is true both of Natural and Moral Capacities: The Priviledges wich I mean are, the pardon of many actual sinnes, committed since they are Adult; the exercise of all Holy Graces; Knowing God; Loving him; Trusting him; Serving him; the Communion that we have with God herein; as particularly in Prayer, in holy Praises and Thanksgivings, in Heavenly Meditations; The Peace and Joy that followeth Believing, and the Hopes of Everlasting Life; the Communion

munion which we have with the Church of Christ in hearing, praying, Praises, the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, in distribution by giving and receiving, and an endearing holy Love within: These and many more Priveledges are proper to the Adult.

That Infants are not *Naturally* capable of these, is as needless to prove, as that they are Infants: And then that they are not *Morally* capable, is an inseparable consequent. For though *Natural* Capacity may be without *Moral*, yet Moral cannot be without Natural: In point of *Duty*, Infants are not *bound* to the work; as to Hear, Pray, Prayse, *&c.* beyond the Natural Capacity of their Intellects and bodies: And so in point of *Benefit*, we must have more sobriety, then to suppose God to make over any Benefit to them which they are not capable of. All this is plain.

Prop. 3. *The Continuation of Priveledges received in Infancy, is part of the Priveledges of the Adult; or the Restoration of them if they be lost.*

IF the cause discontinue, the effect will cease. Adult Priveledges comprehend the Infant

Infant Priviledges, partly as that which i Perfect comprehendeth the Imperfect, an partly as the whole comprehendeth the part and partly as the thing Continued is the sam with the thing Begun. Infant Priviledge would all cease with Infancy, if the Causes o Conditions cease, and there be no othe Cause for their continuance. God neve took Infants into his Church and Covenant, with a purpose so to continue them, without any other Condition then that upon which they were admitted. This is past denyal, and will be more cleared in the next.

Prop. 4. *The Title-Condition of Infant Church-membership and Priviledges, is not the same with the Title-Condition of the Church-membership and Priviledges of the Adult; so that if this new Condition be not performed when men come to Age, their former Title ceaseth, and there is no other that ariseth in his stead.*

See the Rubrick of the Common Prayer Book before Confirmation after cited.

1. WE are agreed I think, that our *Title*, (which is *Fundamentum Juris*) is *Gods Covenant, Graunt*, or *Guift*. As it is his *Precept* that constitu-

G. Cassander *Consult. de Confirm. Hujusmodi sane Institu-*

eth

eth our *Duty*, so it is his *Promise* or Deed of Gift which is our title to the *Benefit*.

2. And we are agreed I hope, that this Promise, or Grant from God is *Conditional*, For if Church-membership and Priviledges be *Absolutly* Given, then it is to *All*, or but to *Some*: Not to *All*; for then the Church, and the world are all one; and then it is not *Ecclesia*, *cœtus evocatus*; and then *Heathens* and *Infidels* have right; which are things that no Christian, I think will grant: If it be but *Some* that have *Title*, then there must be some *Note* to know them by: or else the *some* will be equal to *All* or to *None*. And if they be Marked out, then it must be by *Name* or by *Description*: Not by *Name*; for we find the contrary. Scripture doth not *Name* all that have Title to Church Priviledges. If it be by *Description*, it is either by meer *Physical*, or by *Moral* Qualifications that they are described: The *former*, none doth imagine, that I hear of. If they are *Moral* Qualifications, then either they

tionem seu Catechismi explicationem in pueris fieri debere, & Veteres præcipiunt, & Recenciores quoque ex utraque parte consentiunt. Vide August. Serm. 116. *in Ramis Palmarum, & Wallafridum de rebus Ecclesiast.* cap. 26. *& quæ scripsit* Ruardus Tapperus Lovan. Tom. 2. *ad illud* Calvini Instit. c. 17.

they are ſuch as are *prerequiſite* to our Right and Priviledges, or not: That they are *prerequiſite* all muſt confeſs that read the Promiſe, and all *do* confeſs that they are *prerequiſite* to all the *following* Priviledges: And if *Prerequiſite*, then either as *Means* or *no Means*. The later none can affirm, without going againſt ſo much light, as ordinary Chriſtians have ſtill ready at hand to confute them with: And if they are required as *Means*, then either as *Cauſes* or *Conditions*: And I think you will ſooner yield them to be *Conditions* then *Cauſes*, though either Conceſſion ſufficeth to the end that is before us.

But of this we need to ſay no more, both becauſe it is commonly confeſſed, and becauſe that the words of the Promiſes are ſo plaine, and undenyable, being uttered in Conditional terms.

Nor is this either inconſiſtent with, or any way unſuitable to an *Abſolute Decree*: For as a *Threatning*, ſo the *Conditionality of a Promiſe*, are *Inſtruments* admirably ſuited to the accompliſhment of an *Abſolute Purpoſe* or Decree. He that is fully Reſolved to ſave us, or to give us the Priviledges of his Church, will deal with us as men, in bringing us to the poſſeſſion of the intended benefits; and therefore will by *Threats and Conditional*

ditional promises excite us to a careful performance of the Condition: and that Grace which is *resolved* to *effect* the very *Condition* in us, is also resolved to make a *Conditional Promise*, yea and a *Threatening* the *Instrument of effecting it*.

3. Note, that the great Question, whether all the Infants of true Believers are certainly Justified, or whether some of them have but lower Priviledges, is not here to be determined, but, in a fitter place: And therefore I determine not what Priviledges they are that will cease, if our Infant Title cease. But that according to the tenour of the Promise, the Continuance of them, with the Addition of the Priviledges proper to the Adult, are all laid upon a New Condition.

4. Note also, that when I call it another or different Condition, I mean not that it is different in the Nature of the Act, but in the Agent or Subject. It is the same kind of Faith which at first is required in the *Parent*, for the Childs behoof, and that afterward is required in *our selves*. But the Condition of the Infants Title is but this, that *he be the Child of a Believer, Dedicated to God*: But the Condition of the Title of persons at Age is, that they be *themselves Believers*, that have Dedicated themselves to God. The

Faith

Faith of the Parent, is the Condition of Infant Title; and the Faith of the perſon himſelf, is the Condition of the Title of one at Age.

That *their own Faith* is not the Condition of an Infants Title, I think I need not prove: For 1. They are uncapable of Believing without a Miracle: 2. If they were not (as ſome *Lutherans* fondly think) yet it's certain that we are uncapable of diſcerning by ſuch a ſign. I think no Miniſter that I know will judge what Infants do themſelves believe, that he may baptiſe them. 3. And I think no man that looks on the Command, or Promiſe, and the Perſon of an Infant, will judge that he is either Commanded then to believe, or that his Believing is made the Condition of his Infant Title.

But that a *Perſonal Believing* is the *Condition* of the *Title of them at Age*, is as farre paſt doubt: and it's proved thus.

Arg. 1. The *Promiſe* it ſelf doth expreſly require a Faith of our own, of all the Adult that will have part in the Priviledges: therefore it is a Faith of our Own that is the Condition of our Title, *Mark* 16. 16. *He that Believeth and is Baptized ſhall be ſaved, and he that Believeth not ſhall be damned*, Act. 8. 36, 37. *And the Eunuch ſaid, See here is water,*

ter, what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou maist, Act. 2. 38, 41. Repent and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the Remission of sinnes, &c. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, Act. 10. 44, 47, 48. Act. 16. 14, 15. & 30. 32, 33. Rom. 10. 12, 13, 14. With many other Texts, do put this out of doubt.

Argument 2. We were engaged in our Infant baptismal Covenant to Believe and Repent, when we came to Age, as a means to our reception of the Benefits of the Covenant, proper to the Adult: therefore we must perform our Covenant, and use this means, if we will have the benefits.

Arg. 3. If another Condition were not of Necessity to the Aged, beside the Condition that was necessary to them in Infancy, then *Turks*, *Jews*, and *Heathens*, should have right to Church-membership, and Priviledges of the Adult: But the Consequent is notoriously false: therefore so is the Antecedent.

The Reason of the Consequent is evident. Because a man that hath believing *Parents*, may turn *Turk* (as is known in thousands of *Janizaries*) or *Jew*, or *Pagan*: and there-

fore if it were enough, that he was the Child of a Believer, his Title to Church Priviledges would ſtill continue. And ſo among profeſſed Chriſtians, the Child of a Believer may turn *Heretick*, or notoriouſly prophane and ſcandalous, and yet have Title to Church Priviledges, if his firſt Title ſtill hold, and a perſonal Faith be not a neceſſary Condition of his Right. Adde to theſe the many Arguments tending to confirm the point in hand, which I have laid down on another occaſion in my Diſputations of Right to Sacraments. But I think I need not ſpend more words to perſwade any Chriſtians, that our Parents Faith will not ſerve to give us Title to the Church Priviledges of the Adult, but we loſe our Right even to Church-membership it ſelf, if when we come to Age, we adde not a perſonal Faith (or profeſſion at leaſt) of our own.

I only adde that this is a truth ſo farre paſt doubt, that even the *Papiſts* and the *Greeks* have put it into their Canons. For the former, you may find it in the Decrees, *Part.* 3. *diſt.* 3. *pag.* (*mihi*) 1241. cited out of *Auguſtin* in theſe words *Parvulus qui baptizatur, ſi ad annos rationales veniens, non crediderit, nec ab illicitis abſtinuerit, nihil ei prodeſt, quod parvulus accepit.* That is, *An Infant that*

that is baptized, if comming to years of discretion, he do not believe, nor abstain from things unlawfull, that which he received in Infancy, doth profit him nothing.

And for the *Greeks*, that this is according to their mind, you may see in *Zonaras in Comment. in Epist. Canon Can.* 45. cited *ex Basilii Mag. Epist.* 2. *ad Amphiloch.* thus, *Siquis acceptо nomine Christianismi, Christum contumeliâ afficit, nulla est illi appellationis utilitas*: that is; *If any one having received the Name of Christianity, shall repreach Christ, he hath no profit by the Name.* On which *Zonaras* addeth *Qui Christo credidit, & Christianus appellatus est, cum ex Divinis præceptis vitam instituere oportet, ut hac ratione Deus per ipsum glorificetur, quemadmodum illis verbis præcipitur, sic luceat Lux vestra coram hominibus*, &c. *Siquis autem nominatur quidem Christianus, Dei vero præcepta transgreditur, contumeliam irrogat Christo, cujus de nomine appellatur, nec quicquam ex eâ appellatione utilitatis trahit*: That is, *Seeing he believed in Christ, and is called a Christian, ought to order his life by the Commandements of God, that so God may be glorified by him; according to that* [*Let your light so shine before men*, &c.] *If any one that is called a Christian, shall transgress Gods*

Commands, he brings a reproach on Chriſt, by Whoſe name he is called; and he ſhall not receive the leaſt profit by that Title, or Name. This is ſomewhat higher then the point needs, that I bring it for.

And indeed, it were a ſtrange thing, if all other Infidels ſhould be ſhut out of the Priviledges of the Church, except only the treacherous Covenant-breaking Infidel; (for ſuch are all that being baptized in Infancy, prove no Chriſtians when they come to Age.) As if perfidiouſneſs would give him right.

Prop. 5. *As a Perſonal Faith is the Condition before God of Title to the Priviledges of the Adult; ſo the Profeſſion of this Faith, is the Condition of his Right before the Church; and Without this Profeſſion, he is not to be taken as an Adult membr, nor admitted to the Priviledges of ſuch.*

THis Propoſition alſo, as the Sunne, revealeth its ſelf by its own light, and therefore commandeth me to ſay but little for the Confirmation of it.

Arg. 1. The Church cannot judge of things unknown: *Non entium, & non apparentium eadem eſt ratio:* Not to appear, and not

not to be, is all one as to the judgment of the Church. We are not searchers of the heart; and therefore we must judge by the discoveries of the heart, by outward signes.

Arg. 2. If Profession of Faith were not necessary *Coram Ecclesiâ* to mens Church-membership and Priviledges, then Infidels and Heathens would have Right, as was said in the former case, and also the Church and the world would be confounded, and the Church would be no Church: But these are consequents that I hope no Christians will have a favourable thought of: and therefore they should reject the Antecedent.

Arg. 3. It is a granted case among all Christians, that Profession is thus necessary: the Apostles and Ancient Churches admitted none without it: nor no more must we. Though all require not the same *manner* of Profession, yet that *Profession* it self is the least that can be required of any man, that layeth claim to Church Priviledges and Ordinances proper to Adult members: this we are all agreed in, and therefore I need not adde more proof, where I find no Controversie.

But yet as commonly as we are agreed on this, yet because it is the very point which most of the stress of our present Disputation

lieth on, it may not be amiſs to foreſee what may poſſibly be Objected by any new comers hereafeter.

Object. Perhaps ſome may ſay, 1. That we find no mention of Profeſſions required in Scripture: 2. It is not probable that *Peter* received a Profeſſion from thoſe thouſands whom he ſo ſuddenly Baptized. 3. Our Churches have been true Churches without ſuch a Profeſſion, perſonally and diſtinctly made: therefore it may be ſo ſtill. To theſe briefly, yet ſatisfactorily.

1. The Scripture gives us abundant proof that a plain Profeſſion was made in thoſe times by ſuch as were baptized at Age, and ſo admitted (by reaſon of their ripeneſs and capacity) into the Church, and to the ſpeciall Communion and Priviledges of the Adult at once. To ſay much of the times of the old Teſtament, or before Chriſt, would be but to interrupt you with leſs pertinent things: Yet there it is apparent, that all the people were ſolemnly engaged in Covenant with God, by *Moſes*, more then once: and that this was renewed by *Joſhua*, and other godly Princes; and that *Aſa* made the people not only *enter into a Covenant to ſeek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their hearts, and with all their Soul: But that*

Whoſo-

whosoever would not seek him should be put to death, whether smal or great, man or woman: And they sware to the Lord with a loud voice, and with shoutings, and with trumpets, and with cornets, 2 Chron. 15. 12, 13, 14. So following Princes called the people to this open Covenanting. But this is not all: To take *the Lord only to be their God*, (with the rest of the Law) was the very essence of an *Israelites* Religion, which they did not only openly Profess, but excessively sometimes glory in. As Circumcision sealed the Covenant (and therefore supposed the Covenant) to Infants and aged whoever were circumcised; so had they many sorts of Sacrifice, and other worship, in which they all were openly to profess the same Religion and Covenant. Many Purifications also, and Sanctifyings of the people they had: and many figures of the Covenant. *I am the Lord thy God*, &c. *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me*, &c. was the tenour of the Covenant which every *Israelite* expresly and by frequent acts professed to consent to: The Law is called a Covenant, which all were to own, and avouch the Lord to be their God, and themselves his people. See *Deut.* 26. 17, 18. & chap. 29. 10, 11, 14, &c. 2 *King.* 23. 3. 2 *Chron.* 23. 3, 16. & chap. 29. 10.

Ezr. 10. 3. *Neh.* 9. 38. *Pſal.* 50. 5. *Ezek.* 20. 37. *Jer.* 50. 5. *Iſa.* 56. 4, 5. *Exod.* 34. 27. *Pſal.* 103. 18. & 25. 10. & 18. 10, &c.

And yet I hope no Chriſtian would wiſh that we ſhould deal no more openly and clearly with God, the Church, and our ſelves, in daies of Goſpel Light and worſhip, then the *Jews* were to do in their darker ſtate, under obſcure Types and ſhadows.

We find that when *John Baptiſt* ſet up his Miniſtry, he cauſed the people to *Confeſs their ſinnes*, Matth. 3. 6. And *if we confeſs our ſinnes, God is faithfull and juſt to forgive us our ſinnes*, 1 Joh. 1. 19. And whereas ſome ſay, that *John* Baptized them, that he calleth *a Generation of Vipers*; I Anſwer, 1. We will believe that when they prove it. It ſeems rather that he put them back. 2. If he did Baptize them, it was not till they *Confeſſed their ſinnes* (before that all did,) and it ſeems by his charge, till they promiſed to *bring forth fruits meet for Repentance*, Matth. 3. 8.

Chriſt would not have ſo inſtructed *Nicodemus* in the Nature and neceſſity of Regeneration, before he was a Diſciple, if a Profeſſed or Apparent preparation had not been neceſſary. Nor would he ordinarily have taught

taught men the Neceſſity of *denying themſelves*, and *forſaking all for a treaſure in Heaven*, with ſuch like, if they would be his Diſciples, if the Profeſſion of ſo doing had not been Neceſſary, to their viſible Diſcipleſhip.

I grant that ſo full a Profeſſion was not made before Chriſts Reſurrection as after: For many Articles of our Belief were afterward made Neceſſary: And the Apoſtles themſelves were unacquainted with what the weakeſt Chriſtian did afterwards believe. But ſtill the Eſſentials of Faith, then Neceſſary in exiſtence to mens Juſtification, were Neceſſary in Profeſſion to mens viſible Chriſtianity, or Church-memberſhip.

As to thoſe *Acts.* 2. 37. &c. It is plain, that they made an open Profeſſion, if you Conſider 1. That they were openly told the Doctrine which they muſt be baptized into, if they did conſent: 2. It is ſaid, *They that gladly received that Word, were baptized.* 3. It is certain therefore that they firſt teſtified their *glad reception of the Word.* 4. We may not imagine that *Peter* was God, or knew the hearts of all thoſe thouſands, and therefore he muſt know it by their Profeſſion, that *they gladly received the Word.* 5. Their own mouths cry out for advice in order to their

their Salvation. 6. It had been abſurd for the Apoſtles to attempt to baptize men, that had not firſt profeſſed their Conſent. 7. The Scripture gives us not the full hiſtorical Narration of all that was ſaid and done in ſuch Caſes, but of ſo much as was Neceſſary. 8. The Inſtitution and Nature of the Ordinance tells us, that Baptiſm could not be adminiſtred without a Profeſſion, to the Adult: For they were to be *Baptzed into the Name of Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghoſt*, and therefore were to profeſs that they *believed in Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghoſt*. Yea the very *receiving* of Baptiſm was an *Actuall Profeſſion*. 9. The conſtant Practice of the Univerſal Church, hath given us by *infallible Tradition*, as full aſſurance of the order of Baptiſm, and in particular of an Exprſs Profeſſion and Covenant then made, as of any point that by the hands of the Church can be received by us. 10. And it was in thoſe daies a more notorious Profeſſion to be ſo Baptized, and to joyn in the holy Aſſemblies then now it is. When the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity did hazard mens liberties, eſtates, and lives, to be openly then Baptized upon Covenanting with God the Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghoſt, and openly joyn with a hated, perſecuted ſort of men, was

an

an eminent sort of Profession. It being also usually Private in houses, as separated from the main body of the people, and not in publike places like ours, where men are (justly) driven to come as leaners for instruction.

Moreover, it's said of all that were Baptized (being then at Age) that they first Believed: And how could the Baptizers know that they believed, but by their Profession: Yea, it's said of *Simon Magus*, that he Believed and was Baptized; which (though he might really have some historical Faith, yet) implyeth, that he openly Professed more then he indeed had, or else he had scarce been Baptized. Which hath caused Interpreters to judge, that by *Faith* is meant *a Profession of Faith*. And if so, then sure a Profession was still Necessary.

Yea, Christ in his Commission directeth his Apostles to *make Disciples*, and then *Baptize them*; promising, that *he that believeth and is Baptized shall be saved*. And who can tell whether a man be a *Disciple*, a *Believer*, or an *Infidel*, but by his Profession.

How was it known but by their Profession, that *the Samaritans Believed Philip*, *preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ*, before they were *Baptized both men and women*? Act. 8. 12.

Philip

Philip caused the *Eunuch* to profess before he would Baptise him, that he *believed that Jesus Christ is the Sonne of God*; which upon his teaching the rest, did import the rest, if it were not more fully (as is likest) Professed, *Act.* 8 37, 38.

Saul had more then a bare Profession before Baptism, *Acts* 9. 5, 15, 17.

Cornelius and his company had a Profession and more, for they had the Holy Ghost powred on them, *speaking with tongues*, and *magnifying God*: (that use of the gift of tongues imparting more then the gift it self,) *Acts* 10. 46. Yea, the Spirit bid *Peter*, *Go and not doubt*, Acts 11. 12. And it was such a gift of the Spirit, as caused the Apostles to conclude, that *God had granted the Gentiles Repentance unto life*, Acts 11. 18.

How was it known but by their Profession? *Acts* 11. 21. That that *great number Believed and turned to the Lord*, And the *Grace of God* was such as *Barnabas* saw, *vers.* 23.

And when *Saul* after his Baptism *assayed to joyn himself to the Disciples at Jerusalem*, they so suspected him, that they would not receive him, till *Barnabas* took him and brought him to the Apostles, and declared to them, how God had dealt with him, and how boldly at *Damascus* he had preached in the

the Name of Jesus; which shews that they admitted not men to their Communion, till their *Profession* seemed *Credible* to them. For no doubt but *Saul* told them himself that he was a Believer, before he was put to make use of the testimony of *Barnabas*.

The Converted Gentiles, *Acts* 13. 48. shewed their *Belief and gladness*, and openly *glorified the Word of the Lord*. How but by a Profession did it come to pass, that the *great multitude at Iconium, both Jews and Greeks, were known to be Believers*, Acts 14. 1. The same I may say of the Jaylour, *Acts* 16. Who by works as well as words declared his Conversion. And the *Bereans*, Acts 17. 12. And the *Athenians*, Acts 17. 34. And *Crispus* with the *Corinthians*, Acts 18. 8.

Acts 19. 18. The believing *Ephesians*, *Confessed and shewed their deeds, and many of them burnt* as many of their *Books* of ill Arts as came to *fifty thousand pieces of silver*.

In a word, it is the standing Rule, that *If thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, For with the heart man believeth unto Righteousnes: and with the mouth Confession is made unto Salvation*. He that bids us *Receive him that is Weak in the Faith, but not to doubtfull disputations*,

tations, implieth, that we must not receive them that Profess not at least *a weak Faith*. Heb. 5. & 6. 1, 2, 3. Shew that the *Principles of the Doctrine of Christ*, were first laid as the Foundation; before Baptism. And who received those Principles could not be known but by a Profession.

To this let me adde, that *Pœnitentiam agere* was judged by the Ancient Doctours, the Repentance that was prerequisite to Baptism: and that is, *A manifested, professed Repentance.*

Gods order is (to the Adult) first to send Preachers to proclaim the Gospel; and when by that men are brought so farre, as to Profess or manifest that *their eies are opened, and that they are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God*, then must they be *Baptized*, for *the Remission of their sinnes, and to receive the Inheritance among the Sanctified by Faith in Christ*, Acts 26. 17, 18.

As their *sinnes are not forgiven* them till they are *Converted*, Mark 4. 12. So they must not be *Baptised for the forgiveness of sinnes*, till they *Profess* themselves *Converted*: Seeing to the Church *non esse, & non apparere* is all one. *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*, is the

the ſumme of that Preaching that maketh Diſciples, *Acts* 20. 21. And therefore both theſe muſt by Profeſſion ſeem to be received, before any at age are Baptized.

If as many as are Baptized into Chriſt, are Baptized into his death; and are buried with him by Baptiſm into his death, that like as Chriſt was raiſed from the dead, ſo we alſo ſhould walk in Newneſs of life, Rom. 6. 4, 5. Then no doubt but ſuch as were to be Baptized, did firſt Proteſs this mortification, and a conſent to be buried and revived with Chriſt, and to live to him in Newneſs of life. For *Paul* was never ſo much for the *Opus operatum* above the *Papiſts*, as to think that the Baptizing of an Infidel, might effect theſe high and excellent things. And he that Profeſſeth not Faith, nor ever did, is to the Church an Infidel.

In our Baptiſm *We put off the body of the ſinnes of the fleſh, by the Circumciſion of Chriſt, being buried with him, and riſing with him through Faith —— quickned with him, and having all our treſpaſſes forgiven*, Col. 3. 11, 12, 13. And will any man, yea, will *Paul*, aſcribe all this to thoſe that did not ſo much as *Profeſs* the things ſignified, or the neceſſary Condition? Will Baptiſm, in the judgment of a wiſe man, do all this for an Infidel,

Infidel, or one that Professeth not to be a Christian?

Baptism is said to *save us*, 1 Pet. 3. 21. And therefore they that will be Baptized must profess the qualifications necessary to the Saved.

The Key's of the Kingdom of Heaven are put into the Churches hands; and they that are loosed on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven (if the Key do not erre) And therefore Pastours of the Church must absolve none (by Baptism) that do not by Profession seem to be Absolvable in Heaven: They must *Profess* to have *the old man Crucified with Christ, that the Body of sinne might be destroyed, that henceforth they might not serve sinne*, Rom. 6. 5, 6, 7, 8.

As many as have been Baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, and are all one in Christ Jesus: and are Abrahams Seed, and Heirs, according to promise, Gal. 3.27, 28, 29. This speaks the Apostle of the *Probability* grounded on a *credible Profession*. And therefore it is clear, that the *Profession* was presupposed, that might support this charitable judgment. Our Baptism is the *Solemnizing* of our *Marriage with Christ*. And its a new and strang kind of Marriage, where there is no Profession of Consent.

The

The Baptized are in Scripture called men *Waſhed, Sanctified, Juſtified*, &c. 1 Cor. 6. 11. 1 Cor. 14. 33. They are all called *Saints, and Churches of Saints*, 1 Cor. 1. 2. All Chriſtians are called *Sanctified ones, or Saints*; therefore its certaine that they profeſſed themſelves ſuch.

But why ſhould I go any further in this, when the main ſubſtance of my Diſpute of Right to the Sacraments proves it? I intreat the Reader that would have more, to prove not only the Neceſſity of a Profeſſion, but alſo of the Profeſſion of a Saving Faith, to peruſe that Book, or at leaſt the ſecond Diſputation, where are Twenty Arguments for it; and the ſence of all the Ancient Churches there cited out of Mr *Gatakers* Collections. See alſo Dr *Hammonds* many teſtimonies to prove the uſe of the *Abrenuntiation*, *Paraneſ.* pag. 18, 19, 20. I love not needleſly to recite whath others have already cited. But he that knows not, that the Univerſal Church from the daies of the Apoſtles, hath baptized the Adult, upon a perſonal Profeſſion of Faith, and Repentance, and Vow, or Promiſe, or Covenant for obedience, knows little of what the Church hath Practiſed. And I hope few ſober men will be found that will be ſo ſingular and ſelf-

conceited, as to contradict the Practiſe of the Univerſal Church in ſuch a caſe as this, and ſet up their own private judgment againſt it, and go about to perſwade us to a new way of Church enterance, and admiſſion, now in the end of the world. Blame me not to be confident with you, where I have ſo good ground as Scripture, and ſo good company, as the Primitive Univerſal Church.

To this let me adde, that moſt, or too many, that we are to receive to the Priviledges of Adult members, have violated their Baptiſm-Covenant, and proved ungodly after Baptiſm, and that by open, notorious Scandals. Now Scripture, and the Practice of the Univerſal Ancient Church direct us, to require of theſe an open Confeſſion of ſinne: For they need an Abſolution, and not a meer Confirmation. It is paſt all controverſie, that ſuch have both an open Confeſſion and Profeſſion to make. Yea, how ſcrupulous the Ancient Church was of Receiving and Abſolving ſuch violators of the Baptiſmal Covenant; and on how ſevere terms they did it, is known to all, that know any thing of thoſe times. I pray amongſt others ſee what *Grotius* (*Diſcuſ. Apol. Rivet.* pag. 221, 222.) citeth from *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Pacianus*, *Hierom*, &c. *ad* pag. 235. *n.*

And

And as to the laſt Objection (that *our Churches were true Churches, when we made no particular Profeſſions.*) I Anſwer 1. Without ſome Profeſſion of true Chriſtianity, our Churches could not have been true Churches. And therefore againſt thoſe that would prove them no Churches, we plead (and juſtly) that a Profeſſion was made by them. 2. But I pray you mark, that that will prove a Church to be a true Church, which will not prove every perſon in the Pariſh, to be a true Member of that Church. 3. And he that thinks it enough, that our Churches have a meer Metaphyſical Verity, (ſuch as Biſhop *Hall*, and multitudes of Learned Proteſtants allow the Church of *Rome* it ſelf) is as good a friend to it, as he is to his wife or child, that will let them go naked; yea, and be contented, that they catch the plague, or leaproſie, yea, and plead for it too; and all, becauſe they have ſtill the Truth of Humane Nature.

I know that any thing that may truly be called a Profeſſion, will (in that point) ſeem to prove the Being of the Church. But as it will not ſeem to prove the well-being; ſo an obſcure Profeſſion doth but obſcurely prove the Being of it: which an open, plain Profeſſion doth more clearly prove. Let us

not befriend either the Kingdom of darkneſs, or the Seperatiſts ſo much, as to leave our Churches ſo open to their exceptions, and ſo apt to cheriſh and befriend their ignorance, and infidelity of the world. If coming to Church, and ſitting there be ſomewhat a probable argument, that men do implicitly believe, as that Church believes; yet, it's a very dark proof, that they underſtand what the Church believes: eſpecially when experience hath acquainted us with the Contray of many of them.

But now I have ſaid this much for a perſonal and plain Profeſſion, I would faine know what any man hath againſt it. The Church through the great mercy of God, hath yet liberty to uſe it. And we ſee how many thouſands make a blind kind of ſhew of Chriſtianity, going from one publike duty to another, and knowing not what they do. And is there not need that they ſhould be brought out into the open light, and ſee their way? If Covenanting with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, be the Eſſence of our Chriſtianity; in the Name of God, I deſire you to conſider whether it be a thing

Albaſpin. *in* Tertul. *de Præſcript.* c. 43. p. 308. *Non niſi magna cum deliberatione quenquam in ſocietatem & communionem Eccleſiarum venire patiebantur* ——

a thing to be hudled up in the dark? Unleſs it be mens deſign to hide the Nature of Chriſtianity, and keep people in deſtructive ignorance, and delude their Souls with a name and ſhew of a Religion, which they underſtand not; they will ſurely be willing that men ſhould know the Covenant that they make, and underſtand what they do, before they enter into a Marriage bond with Chriſt, (if at Age) or own it, if they have been entered in infancy. Why ſhould we chooſe Darkneſs rather then Light? Why ſhould an Implicit Covenant and Profeſſion be pleaded for? when the being of a Profeſſion is *palam fateri*, openly to make known; and when we know by ſad experience, that when we have all done the beſt we can, to make our ignorant people underſtand, we ſhall find enough ado to accompliſh it. Ignorance hath no need of frendſhip: eſpecially from Miniſters it deſerveth none: eſpecially in ſo great a point as the Covenant that men make with Chriſt. We have wares that deſerve the light, and need not a dark ſhop. We have a Maſter

Ait igitur diu multumque Orthadoxos deliberare, quorum Sententiis ſubſcribere, quoſve in ſocietatem ejuſdem Eccleſiæ & corporis recipere debeant: contra vero hæreticos ullo diſcrimine cum omnibus hæreticis pacem miſcere.

that we need not be affraid, or ashamed, explicitly and publickly to confess. It beseemes not so high and honourable a Profession as that of a Christian, to be lapt up in obscurity. Such a Glorious state as Sonneship to God, to be an Heir of Heaven, *&c.* should be entered into with great solemnity, and owned accordingly at our first rationall acceptance and acknowledgment. Kings are Crowned more solemnly, then poor men take possession of their cottages. Christ will be ashamed of them before the Angels, that are ashamed of him before men, and will confess them before his Father, that confess him before men. Christianity is not a game to be plaid under-board. Why then should any be against an open Professing, and Covenanting with Christ? If it be needfull that we Covenant, certainly the plainest and most explicite Covenanting is the best. And what will be his portion, that hath a male in his flock, and offereth the worst, yea the halt and blind to God?

Let us therefore deal as openly, and plainly, and understandingly in the Covenant of God as we can, and not contrive it in the greatest darkness that is consistent with the Essence of a Church. Nay let us not tempt men to unchurch us, or separate from us,

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by leaving our cauſe to ſuch Arguments as this: [*ſuch a man ſitteth among other hearers, in the Congregation: therefore he maketh a Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith;*] leſt they think it followeth not [*therefore he ſeemeth to underſtand the Chriſtian Faith;*] much leſs [*he Profeſſeth it:*] eſpecially when it's known that ſo many underſtand it not; and that the Papiſts in their writings, maintain it lawfull, for them to be preſent at our Aſſemblies; and Infidels tell us, that they can hear any man, and do come thither.

Vid. Thom. à Jeſu *de Converſ. Omn. Gentium de hac queſt.*

Nehemiah cauſed the *Jews* to *ſubſcribe the Covenant, and ſeal it,* (c. 9. v. 38.) Even under the Law it was the character of viſible *Saints, to make a Covenant with God by Sacrifice*, Pſal. 50. 5. At leaſt now God *hath cauſed us to paſs under the Rod.* Let us yield to be *brought under the bond of the Covenant*, Ezek. 20. 37. And let us as weeping *Iſrael* and *Judah*, *Seek the Lord our God, and ask the way to Zion, with our faces thitherward, ſaying; come and let us joyne our ſelves to the Lord, in a perpetual Covenant, that ſhall not be forgotten*, Jer. 50. 4, 5. Let us *take hold of his Covenant, and chooſe the things that pleaſe him, that he may bring us into his holy Mountain, and make us joyfull*

in his house of Prayer, and our Sacrifices may be accepted on his Altar, Isa. 56. 4, 6, 7. Are not these the daies of which it is said, *Isa.* 44. 3, 4, 5. *I will poure water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will poure my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessing on thine offspring; and they shall spring as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lords; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.* I would have as little Covenanting for *doubtfull*, or *needless*, or *mutable* things, in Church or State, as is possible: but in the great things of our Salvation, even the Essence of Christianity, we cannot be bound too fast, nor deal too understandingly, and openly with God.

Prop. 6. *It is not every kind of Profeſſion, that is the Condition, or neceſſary qualification of thoſe that are to be admitted to the Priviledges of Adult members, but ſuch a Profeſſion as God hath made neceſſary, by his expreſs Word, and by the Nature of the Object, and the Uſes, and Ends, to which he doth require it.*

THe Negative is not controverted among us. If any were ſo quarrelſom or ignorant, it's eaſily proved. And I ſhall do it briefly, but ſatisfactorily, in the opening of the Affirmative.

I have proved in my firſt Diſputation of Right to Sacraments, (which I deſire the Reader, that would have further ſatisfaction, to peruſe) the Neceſſity of theſe following Qualifications of this Profeſſion.

1. In *General*, as to the *Object* of our Faith, it muſt be a *Profeſſion of true Chriſtianity*, and no leſs. It muſt be a Profeſſion of our entertainment, both of the *Truth* of the Goſpel, and of the *Good* therein Revealed and offered. More particularly, it muſt be a Profeſſion, that we believe in God the Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghoſt, as to the Nature, perſons, and works, which they have

have done or undertaken for us. Yet more particularly, and explicitly: It must be a Profession, 1. That we Believe in God the Father, and so the pure Deity, as our Creatour, Soveraign, and chief Good, who gave us the Law of Nature, by breaking of which, we have lost our selves, and all our part in Everlasting Life. 2. That we Believe in Jesus Christ, God and Man, that taking our Nature, fulfilled the Law, overcame the Devil, dyed as a Sacrifice for our sinnes, Rose again, and conqured death, ascened into Heaven, where he is Lord of all, and the King, Prophet, and Priest of his Church, in Glory with the Father: That he hath offered himself with Pardon, and Eternal Life, to all that will accept him, on his terms: and that he will come again at last to Raise us from death, and judge the world, and Justifie his Saints, and bring them to Eternal Glory, and cast the wicked into utter misery. 3. That we Believe in God the Holy Ghost, that Inspired the Prophets and Apostles, to deliver, and confirm the Word of God, and who is the Sanctifier of all that shall be saved, illuminating their understandings; & changing their hearts and lives, humbling them for their sinne and misery, causing them to believe in Christ,

the Remedie, and heartily and thankfully accept him; Poſſeſſing them with an hearty Love of God, and a heavenly mind, and a hatred of ſinne, and Love of Holineſs, and turning the principal bent of their hearts and lives, to the Pleaſing of God, and the attaining of Eternal Life. This much muſt be believed, and the Belief of this much, muſt be ſomehow Profeſſed.

2. As to the *Acts* of the thing Profeſſed, it muſt be, not only the naked Aſſent of the Underſtanding; but both this Aſſent that the Goſpel is true, and a *Conſent* of the Will, to take God the Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghoſt, to the forementioned Ends, in the forementioned Relations; and to give up our ſelves unfeignedly to him, renouncing the fleſh, the world, and the Devil.

3. As to the Nature of the Profeſſion it ſelf. 1. It muſt in General be *Credible*: For no man is bound to Believe that which is Incredible. The words are the ſigns of the mind, and as ſuch they are to be uttered, and received. If they be contrary to the mind, they are falſe; and if wilfully contrary, they are a lie: And God doth not make a lie to be the Condition of Church-membership, or Priviledges; nor doth he bind his Miniſters, or Church, to believe a known lie:

Nothing

Nothing but Real, or ſeeming truth is to be believed. 2. More particularly, the Profeſſion which we ſpeak of, muſt have theſe Qualifications.

1. It muſt be, or ſeem to be *Underſtanding*. *Ignorantia non eſt Conſenſus.* If a Parrat could ſay the Creed, it were not a Credible Profeſſion of Faith. Therefore the Ancient Church was wont by Catechiſts, to prepare them to underſtand, the Doctrine which they were to believe, and profeſs. This is paſt Controverſie. I think no Miniſter would take that mans Profeſſion, that ſeemeth not to Underſtand what he ſaith.

Therefore it is to be made at years of underſtanding. The Papiſts themſelves ſay in their Catechiſm, compoſed for the *Armenians*, Tranſlated by *Peter Paulus*. pag 194. *Tum recipiendum eſt Sacramentum hoc, quando ad uſum rationis pervenit homo, fidemque profiteri incipit, & ut confirmetur, & ſtabiliatur in gratia opus habet.*

2. No Profeſſion is Credible, but that which is, or ſeems to be *ſerious*. He that ſpeaks in ſcorn, or jeſt, is not to be believed, as one that ſpeaks his mind; nor is it to paſs for a Profeſſion.

3. No Profeſſion is credible or ſufficient, but that which is, or ſeems to be Free and Voluntary. Though ſome force, or outward

ward urgencies in some cases may help to incline the will, yet *willing* it must be; or it is not a Credible Profession. He that Professeth himself a Christian, when a sword or Pistol is at his brest, is not to be Credited, if he continue it not when he is free. And also that which is done in a meer Passion without Deliberation, is not to be taken as the act of the Man, and a true expression of the bent of his mind; unless he afterwards stand to it upon Deliberation.

4. It must be a Profession not nullified by a contradiction in word or deed. Though their may an obscure contradiction, not understood, consist with it; or a contradiction only in Degree; *as Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief*: yet there must be no contradiction of the Essentials of our Profession, that nullifieth it, by shewing that we lie, or speak against the bent of our hearts. If a Minister can by contrary words or deeds disprove the Profession of the party, he is not to believe it, or accept it. For we are not to believe without Evidence of Credibility, much less against it. I have given instances of this in the foresaid Disputation of Sacracrament, *pag.* 10.

5. When by Covenant-breaking, and Perfidiousness, or often Lying, a man is become

come Incredible, having forfeited the Cred of his word, with wiſe and charitable men this man muſt give us a Practical, as well a Verbal Profeſſion, before we can again ad mit him, to the Priviledges of the Church For though we are not to be ſo ſtrict, as ſom old Fathers ſeem to have been, and the *No vations* were, that would not admit ſuch Penitents again into the Church at all, bu leave them to Gods own Judgment; ye muſt we not go againſt Reaſon and Scripture and the Nature of the thing, in believing that which is not to be believed; nor to ca by all Order and Diſcipline, and proſtitute Gods Ordinances to the luſts of men, an make them a ſcorn, or level the Church o Chriſt with the world.

The Teſtimonies cited by me on another occaſion, in the foreſaid Diſputations, ſhew the Judgment of Proteſtants in theſe Points, and ſomewhat of the Judgment of Antiquity I ſhall recite but thoſe on the Title page o the third Diſputation.

Tertullian Apologet. cap. 16. *Sed dice etiam de noſtris, excedere quoſdam à Regul diſciplinæ. Deſinunt tum Chriſtiani habe penes nos: Philoſophi verò illi cum talibus ſu ſtis, in Nomine & honore Sapientiæ perſeve rant*: that is, *But you'l ſay, that even o*

ours

ours, some swarve from (or forsake) the Rules of Discipline.

Answ. They cease then to be counted Christians with us: But your Philosophers with such deeds, do keep the Name and honour of Wisdom.

The Judgment of the *French* Professours at *Saumours*, you have in these words, *Thes. Salmurienſ.* vol. 3. pag. 39. *Thes.* 39. *Sacramenta non conferuntur niſi iis, qui vel fidem habent vel ſaltem eam præ ſe ferant, adeò ut nullis certis argumentis compertum eſſe poſſit, eam eſſe ementitam:* that is, *Sacraments are conferred on none, but those that either have Faith, or at least pretend (or Profeſs) to have it, so that it cannot by any certain Arguments be proved to be feigned.*

The Judgment of the *Scottiſh* Divines, may be much discovered in these two Testimonies following: *Gillespie*, Aaron's Rod Blossoming, *pag.* 514. [*I believe no conſciencious Miniſter would adventure to Baptiſe one; who hath manifeſt and infallible ſigns of unregeneration. Sure we cannot be anſwerable to God, if we ſhould miniſter Baptiſm, to a man whoſe works and words, do manifeſtly declare him to be an unregenerated, unconverted Perſon. And if we may not initiate ſuch a one, how ſhall we bring him to the Lords Table.*]

Ruther-

Rutherford, Due Right of Presbyteries, *pag.* 231. *n.* 2. *But saith Robinson, most of England, are ignorant of the first Rudiments and Foundations of Religion; and therefore cannot be a Church.*

Answ. *Such are materially not the Visible Church, and have not a Profession; and are to be taught; and if they will fully remain in that darkness, are to be cast out.*

If you would have the Testimonies of Protestants, you may read above threescore of them, expresly maintaining that it is a Profession of Saving Faith that is prerequisite to to our Right of Sacraments, cited in my forementioned Disputation second. To which I adde 33. more, cited to a like purpose in my fift Disputation of Sacraments: And to these adde the large testimony of *Davenant*, with his many Arguments, on *Colos.* 1. *vers.* 18. too large to recite.

And for the later sort of Episcopal Divines, that they also agree in the same, I will satisfie you from an Eminent man among them, Mr *Herbert Thorndike*, in his *Discourse of the Right of the Church*, pag. 31, 32. where he saith [*And hereby we see how binding and loosing sinnes, is attributed to the Keyes of the Church: Which being made a Visible Society, by the power of holding Assemblies, to which*

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no man is to be admitted, till there be just presumption, that he is of the Heavenly Jerusalem, that is above.] I shall adde more from him anon.

Somewhat I have elsewhere cited, of the Fathers Judgments in this Point, and more anon I shall have occasion to produce. But in a Point that we are agreed on (that is not *Every Profession*, but only a *Credible Profession of true Christianity*, even of Faith and Repentance, that must be taken as Satisfactory by the Church) I hope I may spare any further proof.

Prop. 7. *The Profession of those that expect the Church-state and Priviledges of the Adult is to be tried, judged, and Approved by the Pastours of the Church, to whose Office it is that this belongeth.*

THis Proposition hath two parts: 1. That it is not a Profession untryed, and unapproved, that must serve the turn. 2. That the trying and approving of it, belongeth to the Office of the Pastours of the Church.

The first is grounded by almost all Christians that I know of, and therefore need not many words.

1. If every man ſhould be the ſole Judge of the ſoundneſs, and validity of his own Profeſſion, then Hereticks, and Heathens, and Infidels may all croud into the Church: for when there is any outward advantage, or other common motive to induce them to it, they would all joyn with the Church: as if they were Chriſtians. And we ſee that it is the cuſtom of Hereticks to intrude: And who ſhall ſay to any of them, why do you ſo, if themſelves are the only Judges? We meet daily among our own neighbours, with abundance that know not whether Chriſt be God or man; nor who he is, nor what he hath done for us, nor why he came into the world, and are ignorant of almoſt all the Eſſentials of the Chriſtian Faith; and with abundance more that live in common drunkenneſs, ſcorning at holy duties, and at a Godly life, and hating thoſe that uſe it, and giving up themſelves wholly to the fleſh, and the world: And yet all theſe men are ſo confident of the ſoundneſs, and validity of their own Profeſſion, that they will hate that Miniſter, that ſhall make any queſtion of their Right to the Priviledges of the Church. I ſpeak not by hearſay, or conjecture, but by ſad experience. And if they be their own Judges, all theſe will be approved, and admitted

mitted; and indeed, what man would not be admitted where Christianity is in credit, or hath any worldly advantages? so that it's certain, that this would pluck up the hedg, and lay open the Vineyard of Christ unto the wilderness. For *self-love* is such a powerfull blinding thing, that it will make every man almost, especially of the worser sort, approve of that which is their *Own.*

2. If every man should be the sole Judge of his own, Profession, and fitness for Church Priviledges, then there could be no *Communion of Saints:* For all the most ignorant and impious persons, would intrude into our Communion; and it would be a Communion not only of actual, but of professed impious men. But the consequent is intollerable, as being contrary to an Article of our Belief, and a principal part of Christian practice.

3. If each man, were the only Judge of his own Profession, then there could be no exercise of Church Discipline, nor keeping, or casting out the wicked: But the consequent is unsufferable: Therefore.

4. If each man be the only Judge of his own Profession, then the Church is an unguided, ungoverned Society: but the Consequent is false; therefore so is the Antecedent.

2. And now I prove that it belongeth to the Office of the Ministers to judge of, and approve, the Profession of such as expect admission, or the Priveledges of the Church.

1. If persons are not the sole Judges themselves, then it must belong to the Minister to judge: But the Antecedent is before proved: The Consequence is proved thus: It must belong either to the Pastours, or the Magistrate only, or the people only; or to all, or some of these conjunctly. Not to the *Magistrate only*: for 1. No man that I know of affirmeth it. 2. It is another mans office. Not to the *people only*: for 1. None that I know of affirmeth this, They all include the Pastours. 2. As I said, it is made part of the Pastours office. If you say that it belongs to *Magistrates, People, and Pastours jointly*, then you include the Pastours: And I grant that in some sort it belongs to them, but in a different sort, as I shall tell you under the next Proposition.

2 It is to Ministers as such that the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven are committed: but to approve of the Profession of such as are to be admitted into the Church, or to its Priviledges, is part of the exercise of the Key's of the Kingdom: therefore it is Ministers,

ſters, to whom it belongeth thus to judge and approve.

I have proved in another place, (and ſo have many others, more at large) that the Key's were not given to *Peter*, or to the Apoſtles, as to private men, for ſo they *were not*; nor as to a Church of private Chriſtians; for ſo they *were not*, nor the repreſentatives of any ſuch: nor yet as to Apoſtles only; for then they ſhould have belonged to none but themſelves; the contrary whereof is certain: nor as to fixed Dioceſan Biſhops; for ſuch they *were not*: and it's generally granted that the Key's belong alſo to Presbyters, either wholly, or the chief of them, and particularly, that in queſtion: Nor yet were the Key's given them only as a Synod, or Presbyterie; for *Peter was not ſuch*: and this in queſtion hath *ever been exerciſed by ſuch Miniſters.*

Arg. 3. The *Rulers* of the Church are the lawful Judges, or Approvers of the Profeſſion of thoſe that come into the Church, or demand the Priviledges of it: But it is the Miniſters of Chriſt, that are the Rulers of the Church, as is expreſt, 1 *Theſ.* 12. *Acts* 2. 28. *Heb.* 13. 7. & 17. 24. 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. Therefore.

Arg. 4. Thoſe that are by Office *the Stewards*

of the Mysteries of God, and Rulers over his houshould, to give them meat in due season, which they must do as *faithfull and wise servants, till their Lord cometh*; are the men that must judge of, and approve the qualifications of those that come under their *Stewardship, Government, and Administration,* of these *Mysteries.* But such are the Ministers of Christ, 1 *Cor.* 4. 1. *Matth.* 24. 45, 46, 47 Therefore.

Arg 5. To whom it belongeth, to *receive men at age* into the Church; to *restore by Absolution*, them that fell off, and to *Administer* Christ's Ordinances to those that are within; to them doth it belong to try, judge, and approve of them, that are to be thus received, absolved, or that expect the Priviledges of the Church: But it belongeth to Christ's Ministers to receive men, absolve them, and administer the Ordinances to them: Therefore. The Antecedent is commonly granted, and plain in Scripture. The Consequence hath Reason so evident, as needs no confirmation.

Arg. 6. If *all that enter* into the Church, or that are *restored by Asolution*, or are stated in a Right to Church Priviledges of the Adult, are therewithall *engaged into a mutual, voluntary Relation to Christs Ministers,*

ſters, then muſt their Profeſſion be judged of & approved by Chriſts Miniſters: but the Antecedent is certain: Therefore ſo is the Conſequent. The Antecedent is cleare, becauſe 1. All that enter into the Univerſal Church, do enter under the hand of the Miniſterie, and thereby acknowledg their Relation to them, and Authority to admit them. 2. Becauſe all ſuch do engage themſelves to be Chriſts Diſciples, and learn of him as their Maſter, not as coming down from Heaven, to teach them perſonally, but as teaching them by his Word, Spirit, and Miniſters conjunctly, ſaying (*Luke* 10 16) *He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me.* 3. Becauſe they all engage themſelves to take Chriſt for their King, who ruleth them by his Laws and Officers; and his Miniſters are his *Ruling Officers*, 1 Tim. 5. 17. Heb. 12. 7. & 17. 24. 1 Theſ. 5. 12. 4. Becauſe they are all engaged to take Chriſt for the great High Prieſt of the Church, who hath appointed his Miniſters, to officiate under him, in leading them in publike Worſhip of the Church; and in offering up the Praiſes of God, and bleſſing the people, and praying for them and celeberating the Commemoration, and Repreſentation of Chriſts Sacrifice on the Croſs. 5. Becauſe they that

enter into a particular Church, where only the conſtant ſtated uſe of holy Ordinances, and Priviledges, are to be had, (though occaſionally elſwhere) do enter into a Relation to the Paſtours of that particular Church; as members of their flock and Church; whom they muſt overſee, and watch over: all this is paſt controverſie.

And then for the Conſequent of the major Propoſition (that *therefore Miniſters muſt approve of their Profeſſion*) I prove it thus. Miniſters are naturally free-men, as well as others: and therefore no man can become a member of their charge, and put them upon ſo great duty as the Relation doth require, againſt their wils, without their conſent, and contrary to their Judgment, and Conſciences. It is an exceeding great burden that lieth on us, and a great deal of work that is required of us, to each particular Soul: in our charge we muſt *exhort, inſtruct, admoniſh, in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon, publikly, and privately, and watch over, and govern them, viſit them in ſickneſs, comfort, ſtrengthen them*, &c. O what a mountain lieth on me, and how ſhould I bear it, if God did not ſupport me? And if every man that *will*, ſhall make me *more* work, and put himſelf under my *Care*, *without my Conſent*,

sent, then I am so far from being a free-man, as all other are, that I am enslaved, and undone in slavery. For 1. They may *oppress* me when they will with *Number*; and *so many* may flock in to my charge, in despight of me, as shall nullifie the particular Church, and by the magnitude make it another thing, by making it uncapable of its ends, 2. And hereby they may force me to leave undone my duty, both to them and others, by oppressing me with work: For when I have ten times more then I can teach and oversee, I must needs neglect them, all or most. 3. And they may abuse the Church, and me with the evil qualities, as well as the excessive quantity of members; and we shall be obliged to give that which is holy to dogs, and to use those as Church members, that are enemies to the Church; and to administrate Sacraments to any, that will have them, how unfit soever; and to prophane all Gods Ordinances, and turn them to a lie. 4. And by this means, the Church will be utterly ruined, and made a den of thieves, and a stie of swine: For besides that all the worst may at pleasure be members of it, all men that are faithfull, (or most at least) will runne away from the Ministry, and sooner turn Chimny-sweepers then Pastours. For what

what man dare venture his Soul on so great a charge, for which he knows he must give an account, when he is certain to leave undone the work of his Office, in so great a measure, and when he knows he may be thus oppresst in soul and body, and so undone by wicked men, when ever they please: yea, if they purposely do it to despight him.

Arg. 7. That which belongeth to all other Superiors, in voluntary Relations, is, not to be denied to Ministers in theirs: but a free consent, and Approbation of them, that they are related to, belongs to all other Superior, voluntary Relations: Therefore to us.

A Schoolmaster, is to Approve the capacity of his Schollars; and a Physician is to judge of the fitness of a person to be his patient, and his fitness for this or that medicine in particular. Not only a Master would take it ill, if he may not have the approbation of his own servants, but have as many, and as bad thrust on him, as shall please; but a husband would think it hard, if he might not have the approbation, and choice of his own wife, but that any might force him to take them that they please. And are the Pastour of Christs Church, the only slaves on earth?

earth? How improbable a thing is this?

Arg. 8. That Relation which muſt be rationally, regularly, and faithfully managed, muſt be rationally, regularly, and freely entered (for otherwiſe we cannot ſo manage it) But the Relation of a Miniſter to each member of his charge muſt be thus managed: Therefore.

Arg. 9. It is plainly expreſt in the Miniſters Commiſſion, that he is to approve of the Profeſſion of Diſciples: therefore it belongeth to his Office, *Matth.* 28. 19. *Go Diſciple all Nations, baptizing them —— teaching them to obſerve all things* —— Which plainly manifeſteth, that it's they that muſt judge, when a man is *made a Diſciple*, and when not, or elſe how can they either Baptize them as ſuch, or teach them the Precepts of Chriſt as ſuch? So when he giveth to his ſervants the *Key's of the Kingdom*, Matth. 18, *&c.* it ſheweth that they are to judge who is to be admitted, and who not, as is aforeſaid: or elſe he would never have ſet them at the door, and made them the Porters, and Key-bearers of his Church, to let men in.

Arg. 10. No man in the Adminiſtration of holy Ordinances, is ordinarily to renounce his own Reaſon and Conſcience, and to act againſt

against them. But thus it would be if we have not the approving of the Profession, or Qualification of those that we must administer them to: Therefore —— He that is to *Execute* here is to *judge*: For 1. Else you will force Ministers to go against their Reason, and Conscience in all administrations. 2. You will deny them so much as *Judicium Discretionis*, which you allow to every Christian, much more *Judicium Directionis*, which belongeth to their Office. Every man must judge and understand what he doth, and why he doth it: you will not force the people to *participate of Sacraments*, against their Consciences. Why then should Ministers be forced to *Give* them against *their* Consciences? Administring is their work: and therefore they must know why they do it, and on what grounds: Else you will make them but like hangmen, or worse, if they must do *Execution* against their judgments, because it is *anothers* judgment. And whose judgment is it, that we must follow, when we go against our own?

Arg. 11. If it belong to Christ, to pass an open Approbation, of the Qualification of such as are to be admitted into his Church, or to his special Ordinances, or Church Priviledges, then doth it belong to the Ministers

sters of Christ, as his instruments: But it doth belong to Christ. 1. For all that enter either into an Infant, or Adult Church-state, do joyn themselves into a neer Relation to Christ: And will Christ have men married to him, and made his children, and members, and servants, without his Approbation of them, or against his particular will? 2. All that thus come into the Church, or are restored, and claim Church-priviledges, do expect, and claime the Benefits of Christ, and the greatest benifits in the world. And shall any man have Christs great, and precious Benefits against his will, and without his Approbation? It may be you'l say, that *he hath already expressed his consent in the free Promise of the Gospel, to all believers.* I Answer: He hath so to *Believers*: but he hath done it *only* to *Believers*, and he hath not said in the Gospel that *you are a Believer.*

Object. *But it's sufficient, that my own Conscience beare me witnes.*

I Answer, It is so, as to all *matters of Conscience*, that are to be transacted only between God and you, as about your Justification, and Glorification, &c. (And yet in this case, Ministerial Absolution is a great means to help the

Its before proved, that men are not here their own judges.

Peace

Peace of your Consciences.) But where the Minister hath to do with you, by Administrations, and the Church hath to do with you in the way of Communion, there they must know what they do, and why, and must have some expression, of what you say your Conscience testifieth to you.

And the Consequence of the Major is plain, (that *if it belongs thus to Christ to approve, then it belongs to his Ministers,*) 1. Because he appointeth not personally on earth, nor useth, or approveth any other way, to signifie his own Approbation of you in particular, for a Church-state, and Priviledges. 2. Because he hath expresly intrusted his Ministers with this Power, as to speak to men *in Christs stead*, 2 Cor. 5. 19. *So to espouse them to Christ their husband, that we may present them a chast Virgin to Christ*, 2 Cor. 11. 2. Yea, and hereupon they are to *give up themselves to the Lord first, and to us by the Will of God*, 2 Cor. 8. 5. Christs Ministers are his *Agents*, or *Embassadours*, as to solicite men in *his Name to be Reconciled to him*, so to Approve them in his Name, and tell them that he is Reconciled to them. And therefore they are to deliver Himself, his Body, and Blood, in his Name to them in the Lords Supper; and to bind,

and

and looſe in his Name; and whatſoever they looſe on earth, (according to his Promiſe) ſhall be looſed in Heaven: So much of his work doth Chriſt by his Officers.

And even mens firſt Faith is a Believing the Preacher, and Chriſt by them, *Acts* 8. 12. *They believed Philip preaching*, &c.

Arg. 12. To whomſoever the *Labour* belongeth, to them the *Power of doing it* belongeth: But it is to Miniſters that the *Labour* of trying and judging of ſuch Profeſſions, and Qualifications, belongeth; Therefore it is to Miniſters, that the power belongeth.

The Major is undoubted: for elſe we muſt be bound by God, to do that which we have no Power (or Authority) to do, and others muſt have Power to do it, and not be bound to it, which are both ſenſeleſs. The Minor I prove.

1. From the frequent Commands of Scripture, that lay this burden on the Miniſters, but not Magiſtrates or People (in the way that's now in Queſtion) All the directions, and Canons which *Paul* giveth to *Timothy*, *Titus*, to the Elders of *Epheſus*, Acts 20. and other Paſtours, together with the Exhortations to performance, and terrible charges given them to be faithfull, do ſhew that it's

it's they that must do the work.

2. From common consent: all would have the honour and Power: but who besides the Pastours would have the work, and care, and severe Obligations to perform it? Will Magistrates, or all the people *undertake it*, to try, and judge of the Professions of every *man* that enters upon Adult Church-membership, or Priviledges, of such as are to be restored? They that will undertake this work must *attend* it, and *give themselves wholly to it*, and conferre with the persons, and do so much work as our people would be hardly brought to do (if they were able) It's unexperienced Rashness, and perverseness, that makes them so jealous of the Ministers Power in such cases, and some of them to reproach us for it. Ah blind unthankful Souls! Do you know what the Ministry and this Power is? It is a power to be the servants of all; a power to spend and be spent, even for the unthankfull. It's a Power to do the most toylsome, and displeasing work to flesh and blood, one of them in the world; such as flesh calls a very drudgery. I profess unfeignedly that if God had left it to my choice, and I should consult with flesh and blood, I had rather preach twice or thrice a week for nothing, and do no more, then to have this Power (a duty of

of judging and governing this one Pariſh, though I had for it many hundred pounds a year. Nothing doth bring ſo much trouble upon us, as that Power which unthankfull perſons ſcorn at. I had rather, if I might conſult with fleſh and blood, be advanced to the Power, of holding or driving plow for you, if not of ſweeping your ſtreets. (Though yet becauſe of Gods intereſt, and the ends of the work, I count it the happieſt life in the world.) And do you grudg us ſuch a Power as this? Would you grudg me the Power of threſhing your corn? Or will you grudg a Phyſician the Power of judging of your diſeaſe, and the Remedy, to ſave your life? Or a School-maſter the Power of examining, and teaching your children? Do the work, and take the Power, if you are able, and can go through with it, and ſpare not.

Arg. 13. It is only the Miniſters of Chriſt, that are *Able* and *Capable* to receive the Power, and do the work: and therefore it is they only that have Authority thereto.

Nothing but the Antecedent needs proofe. And that I prove by three ſeveral Enablements, which Miniſters have, and others want. 1. Miniſters only have ability of Mind, for the work of this tryal, and Ap-

probation. Here I ſpeak of them *Ordinarily*, and I have theſe grounds for it. 1. God hath commanded that the moſt knowing, able, faithfull, holy men, ſhall be deſtinated to this work, 1 *Tim.* 3. *Tit.* 1. &c. And therefore it is ſuppoſed that uſually they are ſuch, or elſe it's the ſhame of the Magiſtrate that ſhould ſee to it. 2. It's they only that ſet themſelves apart to the work and ſtudy from their youth, for the accompliſhments that are requiſite, (unleſs here and there one of other ſorts) And men are likelieſt to be underſtanding in that, which they have all their daies ſet themſelves to ſtudy. 3. We ſee by experience that they are the moſt able, unleſs it be (alas how few) here and there a godly ſtudious Gentleman, or other perſon: who are moſt of them too blame, that they become not Miniſters, I think.

2. It is only the Miniſters, who being ſeparated to the Goſpel and Work of God, do lay by all other buſineſs, and give themſelves wholly to theſe things. Gentlemen, (much leſs all the people of the Church,) cannot lay by their callings to attend this buſineſs of trying, and judging of mens Profeſſions as Miniſters muſt do, if they will be faithfull. Should private members have ſo much Church governing work as ſome cut

out

out for them, and ſhould they bear ſuch a burden, as ſome would lay upon them, under the name of Power and Priviledges, it would undo them ſoul or body, or both: they would find time little enough for it in ſome places, if they all caſt off their outward callings.

And 3. The Paſtours only are capable, becauſe of Unity. For ſhould the People have this work, as ſome would have it, the multitude would hinder execution, and they would turn all to wrangling. 1. Such bodies move ſlowly. 2. Multitude with that diveſity of parts and minds that is among them, would ſet them by the eares; and the Church would be almoſt alway in a flame. If every man that is to make Profeſſion of his Faith, on this or the like occaſion, muſt be tryed and judged by all; ſome would approve, and others would diſapprove and reject, in moſt or very many caſes. Whereas the Paſtours being ſingle, or not many, and more experienced, and able, and vacant for a full enquiry, have leſs reaſon to be partiall injurious, or diſagreed.

Arg. 14. The Practice of the Apoſtles, Evangeliſts, and the Paſtours of Chriſt's Church in all Ages, doth put us quite out of doubt, that it is not only belonging to the

Ministerill Office, to judge and approve of such Professions, but that it is a *very great part* of that Office.

John Baptist received, and judged of the Profession of his Penitents, before he did baptize them. The twelve Apostles, *Mat.* 10. 13, 14. Were to judge of the *worthiness*, or *unworthiness*, of those that they were to abide with, *Mark* 6. 11. Who were the Judges or Approvers of the Profession of the 3000 *Converts*, Acts. 2. 41. but the Apostles that Baptized them, or judged them to be Baptized? Who else approved of all the believers *that were added*, *Acts* 5. 14. even *multitudes both of men and women!* They that *Continued in the Apostles Doctrine and fellowship*, (Acts 2. 42.) *and under their Government*, no doubt entered at first *under their conduct*. *Philip was* the Judge of the *Eunuch's* Profession, *Acts* 8. 37, 38. *Ananias* was scrupulous of admitting *Paul*, but as God himself Approved of him to *Ananias* (Acts 9. 13, 14, 15.) So *Ananias* also must ministerially approve him (*vers.* 17.) Who judged of *Lidia's* Profession, and the *Jaylours*, (Acts 16) but the Apostles, or other Ministers of Christ? What need we instance any more, when we all know, that no Convert entered at Age into the Church,

but

but under the hand of ſome Miniſter of Chriſt, that did Baptize him, or appoint him to be Baptized.

Object. *But this is not our Caſe, for we were Baptized in Infancy, and are in the Church already.*

Anſw. You entred not into the number of Adult and more perfect Members in your Infancy; nor did you make any perſonal Profeſſion in your Infancy: That's yet to be done. Your Parents Profeſſion will ſerve you no longer then your Infant ſtate. Theſe being not in the Goſpel Church before, were at once Baptized, and entered thereby into the Number of the Adult members. So would we do if we converted thoſe that were the ſeed of Heathens or Infidels. But though this be not your Caſe in reſpect of Baptiſm, and an Infant Church-ſtate, yet this is your own Caſe in regard of perſonal Profeſſion, and Adult Church-ſtate.

If the Miniſters of Chriſt in Scripture time, admitted none into an Adult Church-ſtate, and to the Priviledges of ſuch, but upon a Perſonal Profeſſion, approved by the ſaid Miniſters, then neither muſt we do ſo now. But the Antecedent is paſt doubt: Therefore. ——

The Reaſons of the Conſequence is, be-

cauſe the Scripture is our Rule, and the Reaſons of the Caſes are the ſame. If you ſay with the *Anabaptiſts*, that I may as well argue from the Apoſtles example, for the Baptizing of the Aged: I Anſwer ſo I will, when the Caſe is the ſame: when they are converted from Infidelity, or are not born and baptized into the Goſpel-Church before: The Apoſtles did not Baptize at Age, any perſon that was born of believing Parents in the Goſpel-Church, after Baptiſm was inſtituted. As to them that ſay, that

Anabap. Object. Anſw. *Mary Was a Chriſtian, and yet Chriſt Was not Baptized till full Age.* I Anſwer, 1. That *Mary* was not a Baptized perſon: 2. That Baptiſm into the Name of Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghoſt, was not Inſtituted in Chriſts Infancy: How ſhould he be Baptized in Infancy, when there was no ſuch Ordinance of God in the world, as Goſpel Baptiſm, or *Johns* Baptiſm? If you think Baptiſm, and Profeſſion, or Church-membership ſo inſeparable, that we muſt not require ſuch a Profeſſion, but in order to Baptiſm. 1. You ſpeak without proof. 2. You ſpeak even contrary to the experience of the Jewiſh Church: where in the wilderniſs, Circumciſion was ſeparated from Profeſſion,

and

and Church-membership, both of Infants, and Adult, the later being without the former. 3. If we may be Baptized in Infancy, without a Personal Profession, then they are separable: but the Antecedent is proved in due place. 4. No man denieth that I know of, but that Personal Profession approved by the Ministers, is necessary in several Cases, after Baptism. But all the examples of the Baptized Adult in the New Testament, will fully prove, that all men should enter into the state and number of Adult Church-members, upon a Personal Profession approved by the Ministers of Christ: for so did all in the Scripture terms, on Reasons common to them and us: and no man can put by the obligation of the example, by any pretence of an imparity of Reason, but what will be as strong to evacuate almost all Scripture example, and much of the commands. But as to the Baptizing persons at Age, we will do the same, when the persons are such, as the Apostles baptized: and that they baptized none others, was never yet proved; but more said for the Affirmative.

And ever since the Apostles daies, it hath been the constant Practice of the Church, that the Profession, and claim of the Adult should be tried by the Ministers of Christ.

1. In Case of Infant Baptism, the Minister was to receive and approve the Parents Profession. 2. In Case of the Baptism of the Aged, they alwaies entred under the tryal, approbation, or hand of the Minister. 3. In Case of the Confirming of those at Age, that were Baptized in Infancy, it was alwaies done under the hand and judgment of the Minister. 4. In Case of Absolution of those that fell after either Infant, or Adult Baptism, it was alwaies upon a Profession approved by the Minister. To prove these things is vaine, it being the Subject of so many Canons, and so commonly known, both by Record and Practice.

Mr *Herbert Thorndike*, in his forcited Discourse of the Right of the Church, is full upon it, *pag.* 32. he saith, *As the Power of Judging who is, and who is not thus Qualified, presupposes a Profession, so that an Instruction, obliging the obedience of them, which seek Remission of sinnes, by the Gospel, and therefore confidently assuring it to them, which conform themselves. In a Word, because admitting to, and excluding from the Church, is, or ought to be, a just and lawfull presumption of admitting to, or excluding from Heaven,* (N.B.) *it is morally and legally the same act, that entitleth to Heaven,*

and

and to the Church; that maketh an heir of Life Everlasting, and a Christian; because he that obeyeth the Church, in submitting to the Gospel, is as certainly a member of the Invisible, as of the Visible Church. You see here in his Judgment, both what kind of Profession it must be, and who is the Judge of it (of which he is more large.) And surely they that see Confirmation, and Penance, or Absolution, grown up to the reputation of proper Sacraments, and understandeth how they came to it, will never question whether the Universal Church, hath still taken the Pastours for the lawfull Judges, and Approvers of that Confession, and Profession, which in such Cases was requisite.

And that it was a Profession, both of saving Faith, and Repentance, that was expected by the Church; which the Pastours were to Judge of: I mentioned some plain testimonies of Antiquity. *Apol. pag.* 95. to which I shall adde some more.

Justin Martyr, Apolog. 2. Expressing how Baptism was then admitted to the Adult, saith, *As many as being perswaded, do believe these things to be true which we teach, and do promise to live according to them, they first learn, by prayer and fasting, to beg pardon of God, for their former sinnes, our selves also*

joyning

joyning our prayer and faſting: then they a
brought to the water, and born againe, i
the ſame way as we our ſelves were born again
And of the Lords Supper he ſaith, *This fo*
we call the Euchariſt, to which no man is ad
mitted, but he that believeth the truth of ou
Doctrine, being waſhed in the Laver of Rege
generation, for Remiſſion of ſinne, and that ſ
liveth as Chriſt hath taught.

Nazianzen. Orat. 40 vol. 1. pag. 641. *The force and faculty of Baptiſm, is nothing elſe, but a Covenant entered with God, for a ſecond (or new) life, and a more pure courſe of living. And therefore that we ſhould al exceedingly feare, and with all diligence kee our ſoules, leſt we be found to have violated this Covenant.* *Baſil's* words, and many more to the like purpoſe, there recited I forbeare.

And that a man baptized, is not ſo much as to be taken for a Chriſtian, if by word or deed he nullifie that Profeſſion (much more when he never made a Perſonal Profeſſion, when he is at Age) the Ancients commonly agree. Some I cited before: *Tertullian* again ſaith, *Apol.* cap. 44. Speaking of the *Taylor*, *Nemo illic Chriſtianus, niſi plane tantum Chriſtianus; aut ſe & alind, jam non Chriſtianus.*

Athena-

Athenagoras, in Legat. pro Christ. *pag.* 3. *Nullus Christianus malus est nisi haut professionem simulaverit.*

Damascene Orthodox. fid. *lib.* 4. *cap.* 11. *pag.* 303. *Qui enim secundum traditionem Catholicæ Ecclesiæ credit, sed communicat operibus Diabolo, infidelis est.*

Salvian. de Gubern. *lib.* 4. in the beginning: *Nam cum hoc sit hominis Christiani fides, fideliter Christi mandata servare, sit absque dubio ut nec fidem habeat qui infidelis est, nec Christum credat qui Christi mandata conculcat. Ac per hoc totum in id revolvitur, ut qui Christiani nominis opus non agit, Christianus non esse videatur. Nomen enim sine actu atque officio suo nihil est.*

Cyprian, de dupl. Mart. *Frustra miscetur cœtui Sanctorum, in Templo manufacto, si submotus est ab universo Corpore Mystico Christi.*

August. de Baptis. cont. *Donatist.* lib. 4. cap. 2. *Ad Ecclesiam non pertinent omnes qui sunt intus, sed qui sunt in ea piè viventes. Et* cap. 4. *In corpore unicæ columbæ, nec hereticì, nec improbi nominantur.*

See the like passages of the Ancient Schoolmen, cited by *Davenant* in *Coloss.* 1. 18. *pag.* 118.

And thus I have shewed you the Necessity

of

of a Profession, and of what sort of Profession, and that the Pastours of the Church are by Office appointed by Christ, to try, approve, and receive it.

Prop. 8. *Though it belong to the Pastours Office to judge of the Profession of such expectants, yet are they bound up by the Laws of Christ, what Profession to accept, and what to refuse: and if by breaking these Laws they shall dangerously, or grosly wrong the Church: it belongeth to the Magistrate to correct them, and to the people to admonish them, and disown their sinne.*

IN summe, as is aforesaid, *It is a credible Profession of true Christianity*, which they must accept. And as that which seemeth not to be Understanding, and serious, and voluntary, and deliberate, is not credible; nor that which is Nullified by Verbal, or Actual Contradiction; nor that which is made by one that hath forfeited the credit of his word; so on the other side, a Credible mans Profession is his Title-condition, in the Judgment of the Church, or that Evidence of the Condition that we must take up with: And if a man produce the Positive Evidence of his

his Title, we must be able to disprove, and invalidate it, before we reject him: so that it is a *Profession of true Christianity, which we cannot prove to be false, at least by a Violent Presumption,* (as the Lawyers speak) which we must accept.

By this it appears, 1. That a grosly ignorant person, that knoweth not the Essentials of Christianity, is not to be taken for a Professed Christian. For tryal of such, the Ordinance of Parliament, of *October* 20. 1645. doth give us satisfaction (recited in the form of Church Government, of *March* 29. 1648.) 2. Nor one that denieth any of the said Essentials Heretically. 3. Nor one that speaketh Ludicrously, and jestingly. 4. Nor one that speaks in a Passion, not deliberatly. 5. Nor one that is manifestly forced and unwilling. 6. Nor one that saith and unsaith. 7. Nor one whose life doth prove his Profession to be incredible. 8. Nor one that hath perfidiously been a breaker of Covenant with God already, till his reformed life shall recover the credit of his word. So that with a *Credible person*, his bare Profession is Evidence before the Church of his Right; and we must prove him a Lyar, or false in his Profession, before we can reject him. But a man that hath been wicked, *after* open Cove-

Covenanting with God, or Profession
Christianity, hath forfeited his credit, a
therefore must shew us a new life, as well
a verbal Profession, before he is to be r
stored to his Priviledges. In the first ca
(with a Credible person) *we must prove h*
Profession false, before we reject him: bu
in the second Case (with an incredible perso
he must Evidence his Profession to be true, b
probable Evidences, that shall make it cr
dible. If I thought that the very light a
law of Nature, joyned with the known Ge
neral Rules of Scripture, did not put thi
past Controversie, with most judicious Chri
stians, I should stand to prove all this by
parts.

But on the other side, it is hence manifest,
1. That the Pastours of the Church, must re
fuse no man that hath the least degree o
Grace, or makes a credible Profession of the
least. 2. And that we must nor require as a
matter of Necessity, such ripe, or clear,
and judicious expressions, from the ignorant,
bashful, or such, as for want of use and good
breeding, are unable to express their minds,
as we may from others. If a man, or woman
be unable in good sence to express their Faith,
in the very Essentials, or to reveale the
Grace of God within them: yet if upon
out

our Interrogations, and helping them, they can do it in any intelligible manner, so that we do but perceive that it is a sound Profession in the Essentials, which they *Meane*, though they cannot handsomly utter it, we may not reject any such as these. 3. Note also, that defects in Knowledg must be indeed exceeding gross, where the person is willing to be taught, and Ruled by Christ, and use his means, and thus seems to Love God, and Holiness, before they will warrant us to reject them. Should the Judgments of such persons seem unacquainted with some fundamentals, about the Trinity, and the like mysteries, I should search them better, and I should plainly tell them presently of the truth, and if they received Information, I should not reject a willing Soul. The very Apostles of Christ had the Sacrament administred to them by himself, when they did not understand and believe, the Death and Resurrection of Christ. I know that this will not warrant us to give such persons the Eucharist now; because that those great Truths were not then of such great Necessity, as after Christs Death and Resurrection they did become; as being not so fully revealed, nor the Actual belief of them so peremptorily imposed. But yet it shews us this much, that

that even in persons admitted to the Lords Supper, if there be but a Belief in God the Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghost, and the Points of Absolute Necessity, (though in rude and unperfect conception) and a Love to Christ, and a willingness to Learn of him, and obey him, a great deale of lamentable ignorance may be born with, in those that have wanted either Means of knowledg, and clear discoveries of the Truth, or natural ripeness of understanding to receive it. You see then that Pastours are not Arbitrary, nor meerly left to their own wills.

Prop. 9. *It is most evident that Ministers, People, and Magistrates, have each a Power of Judging; but different, as they have different works.*

2. WHen the Question is, *To whom the Sacraments, and other Ordinances, and Church-Relations, and Priviledges are to be Ministerially deliverd as from Christ, and to whom not?* Here the Ministers of Christ are the Judges. And so are they, when the Question is, *Whom must we teach, direct, and perswade, and in Christs Name command the people to avoid, or to hold Communion*

munion with? For those two are our own work in the *Execution.* And if either Magistrate, people, or any other must be Judge, where Ministers must *Execute* and *work*; Then 1. We have not that common *Judicium Discretionis* to guide our own actions, which is allowed, and Necessary to every Christian. 2. Then the Rulers of the Church, are not only degraded, and made no Rulers, but are put into that slavery, and subjection to them, that are commanded to obey them, which no Pastour must desire the People, or any one of them to be in. For we must not deny them a Judgment of Discretion, about their own actions. 3. And by this course, Ministers that are the Eies of the Body, must not only be guided by other parts, but they must execute *against* their own Knowledg, and Conscience, when other men miss-judge. 4. And if so, either God commandeth us to sinne, when ever people, or Magistrates bid us, (which none dare say) or else it is no sinne, when it doth but get their Vote: and so we may warrantably do what the Magistrate bids us, (as *Hobbs* thinks) or what the people bids us, (as others as unreasonably think) As if it would be a sufficient excuse for me, to say, *Lord I did what the Magistrate, or the Major Vote of the people*

bid me, though it was that which thou forbidest. 5. If the people have no such Power over *one another*, then they have none over their Rulers or Guides: But they have none such over one another. Indeed in order to Unity, a Major Vote may (not effectually oblige) but occasion an obligation: But as to Government, let them shew us if they can from Scripture, where the Major Vote of a Church hath the Government of the Lesser part, or that the Lesser may go against their own Judgment, and Conscience, meerly because the greater part requireth it. This Governing Vote, is as strange a thing to the Scripture as a Pope is. 6. Pastours, or General unfixed Ministers, may receive persons into the *Universal Church* sometime, without receiving them into any particular Church: And what have any people there to do with the tryal, or Approbation of their Profession or Qualifications? One can lay no more claim to it then another. And sure all the world must not have the tryal of them. 7. What people did *Philip* advise with before he Baptized the *Eunuch*? Or who but *Philip* alone was judge of his Profession? What Vote approved of the 3000 Converts, *Acts* 2. or of *Paul*, *Acts* 9. or of *Lydia*, or the *Gaoler*, Acts 16. or any other

other that ever were admitted by the Miniſters of Chriſt in Scripture times. And what Magiſtrates were the Approvers for 300 years after Chriſt? No nor after. 8. If in this part of our Office we muſt obey men, againſt God (whether Magiſtrate or People) then in other parts: And ſo if the Vote of the Church, or Magiſtrate, forbid me to pray or preach againſt Pride, Covetouſneſs or Drunkenneſs, I muſt obey them, that is, I muſt obey men before God, and pleaſe men, and be no longer the Miniſter of Chriſt. 9. What can be more plainly contrary to Scripture, then for the people by a Major Vote, to Rule thoſe whom God commandeth to obey, as their Rulers? *Heb.* 13. 7. & 17. 24. 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. 1 *Theſ.* 5. 12. *Acts* 20, &c.

Object. *Paſtours have but a Miniſterial Ruling Power.*

Anſw. Who doubts of that? But is a Miniſterial Rule no Rule? No man on earth hath more then a Miniſterial Power: For all are under God, and the Redeemer. All Judges, Juſtices, and other Officers in the Commonwealth, have but a Miniſterial Rule as Officers: But is that no Rule? Or ſhall the People therefore Rule theſe Rulers? We are Chriſts Miniſters for the people: we are

theirs *finally*, but have our Power from Chriſt only Efficiently. If the People are the Rulers, who are the Ruled? It's a ſtrange ſociety, when the Ruling, and Ruled part is the ſame; where all the Body is a Head and an Eye. 10. If People or Magiſtrates will oblige the Miniſters by their Power, whom they ſhall Baptize, Confirm, or Abſolve, and what Profeſſion they ſhall accept; then muſt the People and Magiſtrates undertake to Anſwer it before God, and to bear all the blam, and puniſhment, if we miſcarry in obedience to them. And truly if they dare undertake this, we ſhould gladly accept of the condition, with a thouſand thankes, if we could but be ſure that God would give us leave, and thus acquit us, and accept of our ſervice on theſe terms. O then how eaſy a thing were it to obey, rather then to Rule. So much for the Power of the Miniſters in this (and other ſuch like) worke.

2. When the Queſtion is, *Whether ſuch a Profeſſor be fit for our own Communion or not, and whether it be our duty to avoid him or not*, then the People have a Judgment of Diſcretion: Not a Governing Judgment, as the Paſtours have; but a Judgment that muſt be the Immediate Guide of their Actions.

Yet

Yet this is to be thus exerciſed: They are to look to Gods Word as the Rule, and to truſt that with a Divine Faith: They are alſo to look at the Judgment and Directions of the Paſtours, that are their authorized Guides; and to truſt them as the Officers of Chriſt. For the Word is their Regulating Guide; the Paſtours are their authorized Directing Guides; and their own Underſtandings are their Immediate Diſcerning Guides. So that they muſt not be wiſe in their own conceits, nor leane to their own Underſtanding, without the uſe of Scripture, and Miniſtery; but uſe their Underſtandings for the improvement of theſe. So that if they know not that the Poſtours of the Church do miſlead them, contrary to the Word of God, they cannot deny them obedience (For the command to obey them is unqueſtionable.) Or if they have not a grounded ſtrong preſumption, or probability of it, they may not ſuſpend their obedience; but muſt leave the Paſtours to the work of their Office, and truſt them in it, and avoid thoſe whom they reject, and hold communion with thoſe whom they accept, and introduce, confirm, or reſtore. But in caſe they know that a Paſtour leadeth them into ſinne, they are not to follow him: and

if they have juſt ground for a ſtrong ſuſpicion of it, they muſt ſuſpend, and conſult with other Paſtours, and get full information: For Chriſtian People are not to be Ruled as beaſts, but as the Children of God; and muſt underſtand what they are required to do, and why, as being free Subjects, (though Subjects) in the Kingdom of Chriſt, and to be governed accordingly.

3. When the Queſtion is, *Whether Miniſters are to be puniſhed for abuſing their Power, Receiving or Rejecting men to the injurie of the Church, and contrary to the Word of God:* here the Magiſtrate is the Judge. For as forcing, or puniſhing corporally is his work, ſo he muſt be the Judge, where he is the executioner, or elſe he ſhould be forced to go againſt his own Judgment, and to be a meer ſervile executioner, which were to him an inſufferable injury.

But here, 1. The Magiſtrate muſt not give the Miniſter a Law to Govern the Church by; (unleſs the determination of circumſtantial appendants) but muſt ſee that we Govern it according to the Word of God, our only and ſufficient Rule. 2. And he muſt not be over buſy, nor unneceſſarily intermeddle in the works of another Office, nor be too confident of his own Underſtanding in the matters

matters of the Paſtours work, as if he knew better then they. 3. But he muſt correct or caſt out thoſe Miniſters that will not obey the Word of God; Puniſhing us for breaking the old Rule, and not making new Rules for us, is their work, ſo be it, he can procure a better ſupply; 4. In this caſe, if the Magiſtrates Judgment be right, he doth his duty, and Miniſters muſt obey him: If he erre, he may be guilty of perſecution, in hindering good, under pretence of puniſhing evil. If his errour tend not to the deſtruction, or great and certain hurt of the Church; the Miniſters whom he caſteth out, are bound to obey him, and give place to others, and beſtow their labours, in ſome other Country, or in ſome other kind at home: But if his errour lead him to deſtructive perſecution, we muſt Paſſively ſubmit, but not Actively, or Negatively obey him, but muſt preach as long as we are able, and do our duty, till by priſon, or death he ſtop us in the exerciſe.

Prop. 10. *To this Miniſterial Approbation of the Profeſſion, and Qualification of the expectant, there is to be adjoyned a Miniſterial Inveſtiture, or Delivery of the Benefit expected.*

THis is the proper work of the Miniſters of Chriſt. He that is Himſelf in the Heavenly Glory, hath left his Spirit within to draw men to him, and his Miniſters without, to Deliver up the Counter-covenant on his part, in his Name, and to eſpouſe them to Chriſt, and to Accept them in his Name, and ſtead. And this *Inveſtiture* is one of the principal parts of the Nature and uſe of Sacraments, which all have not fully Conſidered of. The Papiſts tell us of ſeven Sacraments, Baptiſm, Confirmation, Pennance, Orders, the Euchariſt, Matrimony, and Extream Unction. *Calvin* ſticks not to yield them three. The name *Sacrament* being not in Scripture, but of meer Eccleſiaſtik uſe, and being a word that will ſtretch, I diſtinguiſh between three ſorts of Sacraments. 1. For any Divine Inſtitution which notably ſignifieth Spiritual Grace: And ſo (though I think Extream Unction none, as being now no duty; yet) I doubt not but there's

there's more then ſeaven. 2. For any ſolemn *Inveſtiture* of a perſon by Miniſterial Delivery, in a ſtate of Church-priviledges, or ſome ſpecial Goſpel-mercy. And ſo I grant that there are five Sacraments: Baptiſm, Confirmation, Abſolution, the Lords Supper, and Odination. As a man that delivereth Poſſeſſion of a houſe, doth deliver the Key to him that enters; and as we are Inveſted in the Poſſeſſion of land, by the delivery of a twig and turfe; and as Miniſters were wont to be inveſted, or have Induction into the Churches by giving them the Books, and the Bell-ropes; and as women were wont to be married with a ring, and as a Prince doth Knight a man by a ſword; ſo Chriſt by his Miniſters doth firſt by Baptiſm Inveſt us in our Church-ſtate, and Infant-priviledges: and by Confirmation, confirm us in our Church-ſtate, and *Inveſt* us with a Right to the Priviledges of the Adult: and by Abſolution reinveſt us in the Priviledges that we had forfeited: and by the Lords Supper Deliver to us Chriſt and his Benefits, for our ordinary nouriſhment, and growth in Grace: and by Ordination he Inveſteth the pardon ordained with Miniſterial Power. 3. But taking the word *Sacrament* in that ſtricteſt ſence, as our Divines define a Sacrament,

as

as it is an outward signe of Christs Institution for the obsignation of the full Covenant of Grace, betwixt him and the Covenanter, and a delivery, Representation, and Investiture of the Grace, or Benefits of that Covenant; thus we have only two Sacraments, Baptism, and the Lords Supper. But truly I would not quarrel with them for the meer name, as to the five which I mentioned.

Prop. 11.

Prop. 11. *The ſolemn Miniſterial Inveſtiture of Profeſſours, into the Right of the Church-priviledges of the Adult, is either* 1. *Of the unbaptized, who are now firſt entered.* 2. *Or of the Baptized in Infancy, that never proved ungodly, nor violated that firſt Covenant.* 3. *Or of thoſe Baptized, whether in Infancy or at Age, that have ſince Proved Wicked, and broke that Covenant. The firſt of theſe Inveſtitures is, to be by Baptiſm; the ſecond by Confirmation; and the third by Abſolution. So that the ſolemn Inveſtiture that I am pleading for, is by Confirmation to one ſort (that never proved ungodly ſince their Baptiſm) and by Abſolution to the other ſort that broke their Covenant.*

THe Baptiſm of the Adult, we have not now to do with. Of thoſe that are Baptized in Infancy, ſome do betimes receive the ſecret ſeeds of Grace, which by the bleſſing of a holy education, (and ſome among the prophane) is ſtirring within them, according to their capacity, and working them to God by actual deſires, and working them from all known ſinne, and entertaining further Grace, and turning them into actual

acquain-

acquaintance with Christ, as soone as they arrive at full natural capacity: so that they never were Actual ungodly persons. To these their Investiture in the state of Adult-members upon their personal Approved Profession, is a *Confirmation* of the mutuall Covenant that it findeth them under, and of them in that Covenant.

But there are others (I doubt the most) that since their infant Baptism, have proved Actual wicked ungodly persons; if not openly flagitious and scandalous, yet at least, unacquainted with any special sanctifying work, till after they attain to the full years of discretion. These break their Covenant made with God in Baptism, in which they were devoted to him, and engaged to live to him, forsaking the flesh, the world, and the Devil. And therefore these must come in as Penitents (even as if they had proved wicked after an Adult Baptism, they must do:) and therefore it is first an *Absolution* which they must receive: not only a *Particular Absolution* from an *Act of haynous sinne* (which afterwards may be renewed upon particular penitence) but a *General Absolution* from a state of sinne. Yet this

De Exhomologes. vide Albespin. *in* Tertul. *de* Pœnit. c. 10. pag 297. *& Observ. passim.*

this doth consequently participate of the Nature of the former, and hath a *Confirmation* in it, or with it: Not a Confirmation in the wicked state that such have lived in, but a Renewal, and solemn Confirming of the Covenant, between God and them, which in Baptism was made. So that to such it is as an Absolution and Confirmation Conjunct.

Prop. 12. *This solemn Investiture on personal Profession, being thus proved the Ordinance of God, for the solemn renewing of the Covenant of Grace, between God and the Adult Covenanter, it must needs follow, that it is a corroborating Ordinance, and that corroborating Grace is to be expected in it from God, by all that come to it in sincerity of heart: And so it hath the name of Confirmation upon that account also.*

THe Papists quarrel with us, and curse us in the Counsel of *Trent*, for denying their Ends of Confirmation, and making it another thing. But they falsly describe our Opinion: We do not take it to be a meer Catechising, or receiving the Catechized to the Lords Supper, or to a higher form: But we take it to be the Approbation of the personal

sonal Profession of them that claime a Title to the Church-state, and Priviledg of the Adult, and an Investing them solemnly therein, upon the solemn Renewal (and personal Adult enterance) into Covenant with God. Now in this Renewed Covenant, as they give up themselves to Christ afresh, and personally engage themselves to him, and renounce his enemies, owning their Infant-Baptism, when this was done by others in their names, so God is ready on his part to bless his own Ordinance, with the Collation of that Corroborating Grace, which the Nature of the Renewed Covenant doth import. Otherwise God should appoint us means in vain, and fail them in the Use of his own Ordinances, that use them as he hath appointed: which is not to be imagined: Though the unsound hypocritical Receivers may miss of this blessing; and though as the Degrees of Coroborating Grace, God is free to give it out as he pleaseth. So that the Papists shall have no cause to say, that we needlessly, or erroneously do deny either the name of Confirmation, or the true use and ends of it, or the notional Title of a Sacrament to it in a larger (yet not the largest) sence. We affect not to fly further from them, then we needs must; much

much leſs to fly from the Ancient Practice of the Univerſal Church: But we muſt crave their pardon, if we introduce not their Anointing (though ancient) ſeeing when it was uſed of old but as an Indifferent Ceremonie, they have turned it now into a proper, neceſſary Sacramental ſigne: And if we give not the Confirmed a boxe on the eare, as they do for a holy ſigne, or abuſe it not as they in many reſpects, and turne it not into a meer deceiving formality, in this alſo we muſt needs crave their pardon. So much of the Name, and Ends of Confirmation.

Prop. 13. *Miniſterial Impoſition of hands in Confirmation, and the fore-deſcribed ſort of Abſolution, is a lawfull, and convenient Ceremony, and ordinarily to be uſed, as it hath been of old by the Univerſall Church. But yet it is not of ſuch Neceſſity, but that we muſt diſpenſe in this Ceremony with ſcrupulous Conſciences, that cannot be ſatisfied to ſubmit to it.*

THus muſt we take heed of both extreams: either of rejecting a Ceremony, that hath ſo much to be ſaid for it as this hath: or of making it more Neceſſary then it is, to the

the wrong of tender Consciences, that are not yet ripe enough, to be well informed of it, and to Answer the Objections that they have heard against it; nor yet to receive your Answers.

I. For the first Part of the Proposition, I think it may suffice, 1. That Imposition of hands was used in Scripture times, and so used, as may invite us to imitation, but not deter us from it at all. 2. And that it hath been since of ordinary use in the Universal Church, in this very case, so that no other Original of it can be found, but Apostolical; yea we have exceeding probable evidence, that the use of it was never interrupted, from the daies of the Apostles, down to the Reformation. 3. Nor is it laid aside in many of the Reformed Churches. So that you will find that as it's easie to prove *Lawfull*

Grotius *Epist.* 154. p. 377, 378. *Mihi legendo compertum est manuum impositionem cæremoniam fuisse Judaicam, usurpatam, non Lege ullâ Divinâ, sed moribus, ubicunque precandi pro aliquo causa quædam emerserat. Tunc enim Judæi orabant ut sic Dei efficacia esset super illum, sicut manus, efficaciæ symbolum, ei imponebantur. Hunc quemque morem ut Synagogæ pleraque secutus est Christus, sive pueris benedicendum fuit, sive ægrotis adhibenda sanatio addita, ut semper honos Patri haberetur, prece. Eodem more non ex ullo præcepto, est quod Apostoli manus imposuere*

ful, so it's more likely to be a Divine Institution, Necessary *Necessitate præcepti*, then to be *unlawfull*.

is, quibus ignoti ante hac jure dona conspicua Sancti Spiritus precando conferebant: quod Presbyteri eundem ritum adhibuere non tantum in allegendis presbiteris, puta Timotheo; 1 Tim. 4. 15. *Sed & ipsis Apostolis, ubi novi aliquid opis aggrederentur*, Act. 13. 2. *Ita ut si quotiens manus imponitur toties Sacramentum est, jam nulla futura sit ad precandum pro aliquo occasio, quæ non eo nomine veniat; quod nec vobis Origo, nec veterum in eâ usus repudiat. Et ex una hâc non imperata sed usitâ Judæis Christianisque cæremonia, exstitere illa, quæ dicuntur Sacramenta confirmationis, Ordinationis, Pœnitentiæ, extremæ unctionis immo & Matrimonii.*

I shall purposely say the less of it, because Mr *Haumer* hath said so much already as to the Judgment of the Ancients; and my intent is to pretermit that part (or say less to it) which he hath performed. But that it is Lawfull and fit, if not of some Necessity, I shall prove by the forementioned Evidence.

1. *Imposition of hands, is allowed in Scripture, to be used Generally by Spiritual Superiours, to signifie their Will and Desire, that the Blessing may fall on the Inferiour, or the Gift, or Power be conferred on him, for which they have a call to mediate:* So that it is not

confined to any particular Bleſſing, Power, or Ordinance. And therefore if there had been no example of the uſe of it, in this particular caſe (of Confirmation, or Abſolution) yet hence it is proved to be *Lawful* and *Meet*, becauſe it hath this General uſe and allowance. The *Lifting up of Hands* in Prayer was uſed to ſignifie *from whom and whence* they did expect the bleſſing; even from *our Father which is in Heaven*: And the *Laying of Hands on* the Head of the perſon, in or after Prayer, was uſed as an *Applicatory* ſigne, to ſignifie the *Terminus ad quem* of the bleſſing deſired, or the Perſon, on whom they would have it beſtowed. And as you will not caſt away the uſe of *Lifting up of Hands*, though it be for ſuch mercies, as you read no Scripture inſtance, that *Hands* were *lift up* for; becauſe the *General warrant* is ſufficient; ſo you have as little reaſon, to ſcruple or caſt away the *Laying on of Hands*, though in ſuch caſes as you read not that the ſign was uſed for in Scripture; becauſe the *unlimited General uſe*, is ſufficient warrant, in ſuch particular caſes. God ſhewed that the very outward ſigne of *Lifting up of the hands*, was not to be deſpiſed, when *Ameleck* had the better when *Moſes* hands fell down, though but through weakneſs, ſo that *Aaron* and

Hur

Hur were fain to underſet them, *Exod.* 17. And I think we have no reaſon to contemn the *Laying on of hands*, which in Grounds and Nature is ſo neer kin to the other. And as ſpreading forth the hands, doth not ceaſe to be good and meet, for all that God hath ſaid he will *not heare them* that ſpread forth hands that are full of blood, *Iſa.* 1. 15. So the *Laying on of hands* doth not ceaſe to be good and meet, though in ſome caſes the Bleſſing do not follow it. Still we muſt every where *Lift up holy hands* in Prayer, without wrath and doubting, 1 *Tim.* 2 8. Though the ſigne be not of abſolute Neceſſity in every Prayer, yet it is very meet, and too much neglected among us. And ſo I may ſay of the other. When *Solomon* prayed in the Temple he *ſpread forth his hands towards Heaven*, 1 King 8. 22. And ſo he ſuppoſed all would do, that lookt to be heard by the God of Heaven, when *verſ.* 38. he prayeth for the people thus: *What Prayer and Supplication ſoever be made by any man, or by all thy People Iſrael, which ſhall know every man the plagne of his own heart* (that was their Prayer-Book) *and ſpread forth his hands towards this houſe, then heare thou in Heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and doe*, &c. ſee *verſ.* 54. 2 *Chron.* 6. 12, 13. We muſt *lift up our Hearts with*

our Hands to God in the Heavens, Lam. 3. 41. We must *prepare our hearts, and stretch out our hands towards him*, Job 11. 13. Praying *to a strange God*, is signified by *stretching out the hand to him*, Psal. 44. 20. Even in *Praises* the people were to *Lift up their hands towards Heaven*, Neh. 8. 6. Yea and in *Blessing*, *Lifting up the Hands* was used to signifie *whence* the Blessing came, *Luke* 24. 50. Now *this* being so commonly applied, the *other* that is so neer a kin to it, may without scruple be used in any case that that falls under the foredescribed General case. Indeed *every man* must *list up hands*, because every man must pray, (and it is an engagment, that those hands that are lifted up to God, be not used in wicked works:) but *Laying on of hands* is ordinarily the Act of a Superiour, to the Ends aboveſaid.

Thus *Jacob*, Gen. 48. 14, 15. *Laid his hands on the sonnes of Joseph* in blessing them. *Moses laid his hands on Joshua*, when he ordained him his successour, *Num.* 27. 18, 23. & *Deut.* 34. 9. Yea even in the execution of evil they laid on hands, as an Applicatory signe, as in Sacrificeing; as if they should say, *Not on me, but on this substitute let the Evil of punishment be.* See *Levit.* 16. 21, 22. *Exod.* 29. 10, 15. *Lev.* 4. 15. & 8. 14, 22.

Numb. 8. 12. Yea in putting a Blasphemer and Curser to death, they first laid their hands on his head, as an *Applicatory* signe, in whom the fault was, and to whom the punishment did belong, *Lev.* 24. 14. In the Ordination, or Consecration of the *Levites*, the people were to lay their hands on them, *Numb* 8. 10. Not to give them Authority, but to Consecrate and give them up to God. By Laying on of the hands, as an *Applicatory* signe, did Christ and his Disciples heale diseases, *&c. Mark* 5. 23. Where note, that the Ruler of the Synagogue *Jairus*, took this as an ordinary signe of conferring blessings from a Superiour, and therefore he mentioneth it with the blessing desired, *Mark* 6. 5. & 8. 23, 25. *Luke* 13. 13. & 4. 40. So you may see also the Apostles did; yea, and other believers, as the promise runs, *Mark* 16. 18. *Acts* 28. 8. Also by laying on of hands, as an *Applicatory* signe, they invested the seaven Deacons in their Office, *Acts* 6. 6. And the Prophets, and Teachers in the Church of *Antioch*, separated *Barnabas* and *Paul*, to the work that God appointed them, *Acts* 13. 2, 3. By Fasting, and Prayer, and Imposition of hands. And *Timothy* received his Ministerial Gift, by the *Laying on of Pauls hands, and the hands of the Presbitery*,

1 Tim 4. 14. and 2 Tim. 1. 6. If this laſt Text be underſtood of the Miniſterial Ordination and Gift, which I rather think is meant of the Apoſtolical *Impoſition of hands*, after Baptiſm, for giving of the Holy Ghoſt. So that this ſigne was uſed upon ſeveral occaſions, and is not at all forbidden in this, directly, nor indirectly, and therefore it is undoubtedly lawful: ſeing that without doubt the leſs is bleſſed of the greater, *Heb.* 7. 7. and the Duty and Power of the Paſtour to *Bleſs* the perſon in this caſe is unqueſtionable, and this *Impoſition of hands* is an allowed ſigne in *Bleſſing*, as *Lifting up the hands* is, in *Praying*; here is Scripture enough to prove it Lawful, and very meet.

Leg Albaſpin. *Obſervat.* 31. lib. 2. p. 166, 167, 168.

2. But let us enquire yet whether the Scripture lay not ſome kind of obligation on us, to uſe this Ceremony, in Confirmation. To which end let theſe ſeveral things be well conſidered.

1. *We find in Scripture a Bleſſing of Church-members, with Laying on of hands.* 2. *We find in Scripture, that the Holy Ghoſt is in a ſpecial manner promiſed to Believers, over and above that meaſure of the Spirit, which cauſed them to believe.* 3. *We find that Prayer with Laying on of hands, was the outward*

outward means to be used by Christs Ministers, for the procuring of this blessing. 4. *We find that this was a fixed Ordinance to the Church, and not a temporary thing.* Lay all this together, and you will see as much as my Proposition doth affirm. Let's try the proof of it.

I. Though the proof of the first be not Necessary to the main point, yet it somewhat strengtheneth the cause, *Mark* 10. 16. Christ took the Children up in his armes, put his hands upon them, and blessed them so, *Math.* 19. 15. This is not I confess a Confirmation upon personal Profession, which I am now pleading for: But this is a Benediction by laying on of hands: And the subjects of it were such Children as were Members at least of the Jewish Church, being before Circumcized.

II. But to come neerer the matter; let us enquire what this Gift of the Holy Ghost was, that is promised to Believers. Whatsoever the *Pelagians* say, the Scripture assureth us that Faith and Repentance which go before Baptism in the Adult, are the gifts of the Holy Ghost: and yet for all that the Holy Ghost is to be given afterward. And though very often this after-gift is manifested by Tongues, and Prophesie, and Miracles,

yet that is not all that's meant in the promise of the Holy Ghost. God hath not tyed Himself by that promise to any one sort of those extraordinary Gifts, no nor constantly to give any of them: But he hath promised in General to give Believers the Spirit: and therefore there is some other standing gift, for which the Spirit is promised to all such. And indeed the Spirit promised is *One, though* the gifts are many; and the many sorts of gifts make not many Spirits. If any man therefore shall ask, whether by the Promised Spirit be meant Sanctification, or Miracles, or Prophesie, *&c.* I Answer with *Paul*, *There are diversities of Gifts, but the same Spirit, as there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord, and diversities of operations, but the same God*, 1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6. It is therefore no wiser a question to ask, whether by *the Spirit* be meant *this gift*, or *that*, when it is only *the Spirit in General* that is promised, then to ask, whether by *the Lord* be meant *this or that administration*; and whether by *God* be meant this or that *operation*. *To one is given the Word of Wisdom by the Spirit, and to another the Word of Knowledg, by the same Spirit, to another Faith by the same Spirit*, &c. *vers.* 8, 9, 10. Now I confess if any man can prove that this promise

of

of the Spirit to the faithfull, is meant only of the extraordinary gift of Miracles, then he would weaken the Argument that I am about. But I prove that contrary, 1 *Cor.* 12. 12, 13. It is the gift of the Spirit, by which we are *One body*, which is called *Christs*, *by which we are all baptized into this one body*; and such members as have a lively fellow-feeling of each others state, *vers.* 26. 27. Yea such as giveth to the Elect, the excellent, durable grace of Charity, *vers.* 31. and Chap. 13.

Gal. 4. 6. *And because ye are Sonnes, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Sonne into your hearts, crying Abba, Father.* Note here, that it is not only the gift of Miracles, but the Spirit of Adoption that is here mentioned; and that it's given to Believers, because they are Sonnes. And all the first part of *Rom.* 8. to *vers.* 29. doth shew, that it is the Spirit of Adoption, Supplication, and that by which we mortifie the flesh, that is given to Believers.

2 Cor. 1. 21, 22. *Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.* It is not the common gifts of the Spirit only that are here spoken of, nor is it the first gift of Faith,

but

but it is *Confirmation*, or inward eſtabliſhment in Chriſt, and that Spirit, which is the *Fathers Seal* upon us, and *the earneſt of the Inheritance*. I believe not that it is outward Anointing, or ſealing with the ſigne of the Croſs, that is here mentioned, as many Papiſts dreame; but inward unction, ſeal, earneſt, and confirmation by the Spirit, are here expreſt. So 2 *Cor.* 5. 5. *Zach.* 12. 10. It is the *Spirit of Grace and Supplication* that is promiſed to the Church. And ſee the pattern in Chriſt our head, on whom after Baptiſm *the Spirit deſcended*, and to whom it is *promiſed*, Matth. 12. 18.

Epheſ. 1. 13, 14. *In whom alſo after yee believed, yee were ſealed with the Holy Spirit of promiſe, which is the earneſt of our Inheritance.* Here it's evident that it's ſuch a gift of the Spirit, which is an *Earneſt* of Heaven that is given to men, after they believe.

Joh. 7. 39. *For the Holy Ghoſt was not yet given them becauſe that Jeſus was not yet Glorified.* Yet the Apoſtles had *Saving Faith* then. And that it is not meant only of the Apoſtles extraordinary gifts of Miracles, the foregoeing words ſhew: *He that believeth on me, out of his belly ſhall flow living waters: but this he ſpake of the Spirit, which they that*

that believe on him should receive.

By all this it is evident, that there was an Eminent gift of the Holy Ghost promised to them that had already the grace of *Faith, and Repentance, and Love to Christ*, wrought in them by the Holy Ghost; and that though this Eminent Gift, did very much consist in gifts of Languages, Prophesie, and mighty works for the Confirmation of Christs Doctrine which was then to be planted in the world: yet was it not only in those gifts; but as some had only those common (though extraordinary) gifts, for the good of the Church; so some had an Eminent addition of Special Gifts, to seal them up to the day of Redemption, and be the earnest of the Inheritance, to the saving of the Soul. If you ask, *Wherein these special Eminent Gifts of the Holy Ghost do consist*, I Answer: 1. In a clearer knowledg of Christ, and the Mysteries of the Gospel; not an uneffectual, but a powerful, affecting, practical Knowledge. 2. In a fuller measure of Love, agreeable to this Knowledg. 3. In Joy and Peace, and sweet Consolation. 4. In establishment, and corroboration, and firmer resolution for Christ, and everlasting Life.

For the understanding of which we must know, that as the Doctrine is the Means of con-

conveying the Spirit, so the Spirit given is answerable to the Doctrine, and Administration that men are under. It's a very great question whether *Adam* in Innocency had the Spirit or not? But as the Administration according to the meer Light, and Law of Nature, is eminently in Scripture attributed to the Father, so *Adam* certainly may be well said to have had the Spirit of the Father, to enable him with gifts that were answerable to the Law that he was under, and the state that he was in: But we cannot fitly say that he had that which the Scripture calleth the Spirit of the Sonne, as not being under the Administration of the Sonne. But after the Promise till the coming of Christ, as the Administration was mixt of Law and Promise, Nature and Grace, as the dawning of the day before Sunne rising doth partake of darkness and of Light, so the Spirit that was then given, was answerable to the Administration and Doctrine. And therefore as there was somewhat of the Gospel in those times, though yet God hath not thought it meet to call it (at least usually) by that name, but rather by the name of *the Promises*, and *Prophecies of Christ*; so there was somewhat of the Spirit of Christ, though it be not usually so called, but when it appeared in some eminent

eminent Servants of Christ, as the Prophets were, in whom the *Spirit of Christ* is said to have been, *1 Pet.* 1. 11. Now as it was part of that work ascribed to the Father, to *send and give the Sonne*, and to *Give men to the Sonne*; so commonly those *Gifts* are ascribed to *Him* which are cotained in these expressions, and are the accomplishment of this work; And that not only in the old Testament, but in the New: and therefore it is called the *Giving and the Drawing of the Father*, by which we are brought to *Believe in the Sonne*; though yet the Grace of Faith is a special Saving Grace, and not common to the wicked, as the Papists dreame, because they find an uneffectual Assent to be common.

But now, as Christ at his coming doth bring to the world a clearer Light, and fuller Revelation of Himself, and the mysteries of Redemption, and *bring Life and Immortality to Light in the Gospel*; and as the rising Sunne, dispelleth the remnants of Legal darkness, and his Doctrine is fully called *The Gospel*, *the Testament of Jesus Christ*, so answerably he doth by, and with this Doctrine, give out such a measure of the Spirit, to the Church; as is Eminently called *the Spirit of Jesus Christ*. Which carryeth us higher

higher then the first Grace of Faith and Re pentance, to those fuller degrees which were not ordinary, no not to the Godly in th time of the Law. And as this Spirit o Christ did extrinsecally shine in the Glory o tongues and wonderous works, while thos were necessary to the Church, and Christ service; so both then, and ever after it doth work (but in various degrees) for the San ctifying of believers, and conforming their hearts and lives to Christ; in his humiliation, patience, self-denial, meekness, contempt of the world, obedience, *&c.* till at last we be conformed to him in his Glory.

III. I have cleared the second point, (*that there is an Eminent Gift of the Holy Ghost to be expected after our first Believing, even such as ceased not with Miracles*: I now come to the third point, which is, *That Ministerial Prayer with Laying on of hands, was the Scripture- way for the giving of this Eminent gift of the Spirit.*

For the understanding of this, observe these things: 1. How Sacraments, and Investing signes, conferre Grace. 2. How the Spirit is given in Baptisme 3. How far God hath, as it were, tyed himself to Ordinances for conferring Grace. 4. What proof the Scripture yields us of the Proposition.

tion. 5. What aptitude there is in Miniſterial Confirmation, for the attainment of theſe ends.

1. We find in Scripture, that Sacraments are not appointed (nor to be uſed, according to the intent of the inſtituter) for the conferring of that Grace which men have not in any degree already: but they are, 1. Partly a *Solemn Inveſtiture* in that which before we had a *Fundamental Right* to: as the Lifting of a Souldiour, or the ſolemnization of Marriage after a firm contract; the Crowning of a King; the delivering poſſeſſion by a Key, a twig, or turf; the Knighting a man by a ſword, *&c.* This is as to Relative benefits, and Right to Phyeal benefits. 2. And withal they are by actual excitation of Grace, to Increaſe the Inherent Grace received, and ſo to give us more. All this is evident in Baptiſm it ſelf, where we are to receive both Remiſſion of ſinnes, with right to Everlaſting Life, and alſo an increaſe of Grace in the Adult: And yet no man at age, is to come to Baptiſm (to require it) that is not a Penitent Believer already, and conſequently that hath not the beginning of ſpecial Saving Grace, and ſomewhat of Chriſt, and the Holy Ghoſt; and title to forgiveneſs, and Everlaſting Life. For he is under the promiſe

promise that *Whoesoever believeth, shall not perish, but have Everlasting Life:* and a Papist will grant, that the *Votum Baptismi* may serve to his Salvation, if he die without it. And the case of Infants is the same, as to these Mercies which are Necessary to their state of life. Their Parents must be Believers, before they Dedicate them to God, and consequently the Child hath the Covenant right before it is sealed. And it is ridiculous in the Papists to damn all Infants, for want of Baptism, and not the Aged; and to make the *Votum* to serve for the Parent, and yet not for his Child, when yet the Parents Faith must serve to prove his Title to Baptism itself. But to leave these Corrupters, and Innovatours; we see now what is to be expected by Confirmation: Not that men that have no signes of Corroborating Grace, should come thither first to receive it; but that such as appear *Initially Resolved, Confirmed, and Corroborated*, may be (though not by a full and proper Sacrament, yet) *Ministerially*; 1. *Invested* into the state of the Confirmed, and their Priviledges, which is a higher form in the Schoole of Christ. 2. And may receive yet further Confirmation, and Corroboration by Gods Approbation, and Ordinance.

2. *But*

2. *But hath not Baptism done all this already, seeing we are Baptized into the Name of the Holy Ghost?* This is our second Point to be resolved. I Answer, It is a great errour, to think that Adult Persons that have nothing of the Holy Ghost, may demand Baptism, and that Baptism doth not give the Holy Ghost: But yet it's one thing to give the Holy Ghost in *Relation*, *and Fundamental Right*, and another thing to give the Graces of the Spirit; and it's one thing to seale and increase the Initial, Special Grace of the Spirit, and another thing to Invest in a stablishing degree: And so it is evident that Baptism, as such is appointed but for the two first: That is, 1. As we must have some Faith and Repentance, before a person at age may come to Baptism, and so must have Fundamental Right by promise, to Christ, and pardon, and life, so this is *sealed* in Baptism, and we are *solemnly Invested* in it, and our Grace excited for increase: But it is not requisite that a man have a further degree of Grace before he come. 2. In Baptism, it is our very Relation to God, as our Father and God, to Christ as our Saviour, and to the Holy Ghost as our Sanctifier, that is sealed to us, and we are Invested with: which is the Foundation of all that afterward

from the Spirit is given us. As in Marriage, the perſons in Relation, are given to each other for Marriage ends; So in Baptiſm, God the Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghoſt, one God in three perſons, are ſolemnly given to us in Relation to themſelves, for Chriſtian, Baptiſmal Ends. But as after Marriage, the man takes home his wife, and delivereth her a poſſeſſion of his houſe firſt, and after admits her to bed and board, according to his Covenant, ſo Chriſt doth after Baptiſm, take home the Chriſtian into his Church, and admit him to the ſeveral Priviledges of it, in the ſeaſon, and manner as he ſeeth meet. So that as all the good that we do after Baptiſm, is but the fulfilling of our Baptiſmal Covenant, and yet we did not the good when we Covenanted to do it: So all the after-Mercies, that God giveth us by promiſe (at leaſt) on his part, are but the fulfilling, or fruits of his Baptiſmal Covenant; and that he did not give them in our Baptiſm. So that Confirmation is no full, and proper Goſpel Sacrament as Baptiſm is, but a particular ſubſequent Inveſtiture, in ſome of the fruits of Baptiſm it ſelf, in the ſeaſon of them.

3. *But have We any certainty, that this Ordinance ſhall prove effectually confirming to us?*

us? If not it will be but an idle, empty Ceremony. This is our third Question: To which I Answer: 1. Ordinances are Duties, which we must use, and in which we must wait on God for his blessing, if we will have it: and therefore in the way of Duty, we must be found. 2. What if you have not a certainty that your Prayer shall be granted, will you not therefore pray? Or if you are not certain that a Sermon shall profit you, will you not hear it? Or that Reading shall profit you, will you not read? Or that the Lords Supper shall increase your Grace; will you not use it? 3. But I may say more: If you come prepared, you may be sure of a Blessing in some degree: As it is not every one that Prayeth, and heareth, and Receiveth the Lords Supper, that shall certainly have the blessing, but the prepared Soul that is the subject of the promise, which is annexed to that Ordinance; so it is not every one, that is externally Confirmed by Prayer, and Imposition of hands, that shall be sure of the Blessing, but the Soul that is prepared, as aforedescribed. 4. But yet the several Degrees of Blessing, God hath kept in his own hand, and not affixed them by promise to any person, in any Ordinance: He may bless the Word, Prayer, the Lords Supper, *&c.*

to one true Chriſtian more then to another, and yet perform his promiſe to them all: and ſo he may this outward Confirmation.

3. *But what proofe is there in Scripture of ſuch an Ordinance, or Practice?* That's our fourth Queſtion: To which I Anſwer, 1. For the main Point in queſtion, it's already proved, beyond all Controverſie, *viz.* the Neceſſity of a Perſonal Profeſſion, and Covenant, before men be admitted to the Church-priviledges of the Adult, and that it belongeth to the Office of Chriſt's Miniſters to judge of, and approve this Profeſſion, *&c.* It is none of this that we have now to prove, but only the *Manner of Admiſſon* hereupon, whether it be to be done *by Prayer with Benediction, and Impoſition of hands*: And it is not the *Lawfulneſs* of this; for that's proved before: but *whether this Manner and Solemnity be a thing which ordinarily we ſhould obſerve?* And that it is ſo, this ſeems to me to prove, 1. As beyond Controverſie it belongeth to Spiritual Superiours, even the Miniſters of Chriſt, to *Pray* for the people, and *Bleſs* them, ſo this muſt be in a ſpecial manner exerciſed upon great and ſpecial Occaſion: But the Admiſſion of the Adult upon their perſonal Covenanting and Profeſſion, is a great and

ſpecial

ſpecial Occaſion: This is as good an Argument as we have for ſtated Family-prayer, that I remember; and it's cleerly good for both.

1. I ſhould but trouble you to prove the General Part of the Major, that it belongeth to the Paſtours to Pray for, and Bleſs the people Miniſterially. 2. And the application to this ſeaſon is proved thus; 1. *All things are Sanctified by the Word and Prayer*: Therefore this. 2. If the great and ſpecial works, and changes of our lives, be not thus to be Sanctified, much leſs the ſmaller; and ſo the whole Command would be void. We agree, that at Marriage, at our Inveſtiture in the Miniſterial Office, *&c.* there muſt be Miniſterial Prayer, and Benediction, uſually to Sanctifie it to the faithful: But here there is as great, if not greater reaſon for it, the change and bleſſing being in ſome ſort greater *.

And as this is plain for Miniſterial Prayer and Benediction, ſo it ſeems that the Weight and Nature of the work, doth determin us to the ſigne of Impoſition of hands, ſeeing God hath not tyed

* As ſome doubt whether Converſion, or building up be the greater work (and give it to the later, that they may conclude the later only to be the work of Paſtours, and the former, but of gifted private men (ſo the doubt in this it

caſe, is on the ſame ground, whether Baptizing and Confirming, be not as great as Ordaining, (and ſome give it to the later, leſt Preſbyters be thought to have power to ordain.) But I Anſwer both as. *Aquila in Scotell. in ſent. 4. Deſ. 7. 8. & 2. pag. 816.* In the caſe of Confirmation: *Quando bene ſit comparatio harum gratiarum: hæc poteſt fieri dupliciter. Uno modo ſine Præciſione; & ſic omnino major eſt gratia confirmationis, quam Baptiſmalis; ſicut bene & perfecte vivere, eſt melius quam vivere: ſi autem fiat comparatio harum gratiarum cum præciſione, ſic major eſt gratia Baptiſmalis quam confirmationis, quia majoris virtutis eſt mortuum vivificare, quam vivificatum fortificare.* So I ſay between Initiating a Chriſtian, and Initiating a Miniſter.

it to any one or two particular caſes, but made it a ſigne of General uſe, in Spiritual Benediction, and Collations of authority, from a Superiour, or great and ſpecial Occaſions.

2. But we have yet a more clear proof from Scripture example, *Acts* 8. 15, 16, 17. *Peter* and *John* were ſent to *Samaria*, when they heard that they believed, and *When they were come down, they Prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghoſt; for as yet he was fallen on none of them: only they were Baptized in the Name of the Lord Jeſus: Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghoſt.* So

Acts 19.

Acts 19. 5, 6. *When they herad this, they were Baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus: And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with Tongues, and Propheſied.* And *Acts* 9. 17. *Ananias laid his hands on Saul* (before Converted by a voice from Heaven, though not Baptized) that he might receive his ſight and the Holy Ghoſt at once.

And this was the gift that *Simon Magus* would have bought with money. And it ſeemeth to me moſt probable, that this was the gift that *Timothy* received by Laying on of *Pauls* hands (which being for the ſervice of the Church, 1 *Cor.* 12. 7. He was to ſtirre up, and exerciſe in his Miniſtry.) 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. And that the *Laying on of the hands of the Presbytery*, 1 Tim. 4. 14. was at another time. That the Holy Ghoſt was then given by Prayer, with Impoſition of hands, is thus evident.

IV. But the laſt Point remaineth, *Whether this were not Temporary and now ceaſed:* (whether I ſhall take in the fifth particular, before named, about the Aptitude of the means now.) And 1. When I have proved it once *Appointed*, it lyeth on the contrary minded, to prove it changed, or ceaſed: That's the task of them that affirm it ceaſed.

If I ſhew them an obligation once laid, they muſt prove it taken off. Their only Argument is, that the perſons and occaſion were only extraordinary, and are ceaſed, and therefore ſo is the ſigne or means. To which I Anſwer, 1. By denying the Antecedent; both as to perſons and occaſion: They were not *Only extraordinary*. 2. By the denying the Conſequence, as it is inferred from the perſons: For extraordinary perſons were our patterns for ordinary, durable works.

But I prove the Negative: 1. The Uſe and Ends of the Ancient Impoſition of hands do ſtill continue: Therefore we are to judge that the ſigne and means is not to ceaſe. For the proofe of the Antecedent, remember that I have before proved, that it was not only (though very eminently) the gift of Tongues and Miracles, that was then meant by *the Holy Ghoſt* that was given, but alſo *Corroborating* Grace. And the neceſſity and actual collation, and uſe of this doth ſtill continue.

2. There is ſtill a diſcernable Aptitude in the means to theſe neceſſary Ends. The Baptized believer may yet want *the Joy of the Holy Ghoſt*, and *boldneſs of Acceſs to God*, and *the ſhedding abroad of fuller Love in the heart*, Rom. 5. 5, And that *Conſolation* which is much

much of the work of the *promised Spirit*, which therefore is called *the Comforter*; and that *Corroboration*, and *Stability* which he needeth. Now to have a Messenger of Christ that hath received *a binding and loosing power*, in the Name of Christ to *Encourage* us in our Profession, and to put up *Solemn Prayers* for us, and as it were take us by the hand, and place us in the higher form (at least, to place us at our first personal Profession, among Adult believers) and make particular application of the Promise to us, and Bless us in the Name of Christ, by virtue of their Ministerial Office; this must needs tend much to confirm, and comfort, and encourage the weak. Though still further Ministerial Confirmation by Praying, and Exhortation will be necessary to the end, *Acts* 14. 22. & 15. 31, 32.

3. The Scripture signifieth to us, that *Imposition of hands* was of standing use in the Church, and therefore not to cease with Miracles. In *Heb.* 6. 2. We find it named among the parts of the Foundation, *Laying on of hands.* Now all the doubt is, *what Impositon of hands* is there mentioned. 1. For them that think the Apostle meaneth Jewish Imposition, when he mentioneth the Christian Foundation Points, I think their Opi-

nion

tion saveth me the labour of Confuting it. 2. Either then it is Imposition of hands, in case of *Ordination*, or in case of *Confirmation*, or in case of *Absolution*, or for *working Miraculous* cures. The last alone it cannot be, because we find it among *Foundation Points*, and find it a continued thing; and because there is no evidence, to lead us to such a restrained exposition. And if it be in the case of *Absolution*, or *Ordination*, that Imposition is to continue, it will by consequence be proved, that it no more ceaseth *here* then *there*. And usually they that question the use of it in one case, question it in the rest. 3. For my part, I think that it is no one of these cases alone, that the Scripture here speaketh of, but of the Power and use of it in General, for the Ministers of Christ to be his Instruments, in conferring Evangelical Gifts, and Power, by imposition of hands. We must not limit, and restrain the sence of Scripture, without Evident cause. It is as if the Apostle had said, *You are long ago taught the Necessity of Repenting, and forsaking the Works of Death, and of Believing in the true God, and of being Dedicated, and Engaged to Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghost in the Baptismal Covenant, in which you your selves have been consecrated unto God, and*

received

received the remission of sinne; and you have seen the Power that is given to the Ministers of Christ, that by their Prayers, and Imposition of hands, Miracles have been wrought to confirm their Doctrine, and Grace is given to confirm the Soul, and Absolution and Peace is given to the Penitent, and Ministeriall Power delivered to others, &c. But however you understand this *Imposition of hands*, without apparent violence, you must confess either Imposition in the case that we are speaking of, or that which will warrant it, and stands on the same ground, to be here meant.

So 1 *Tim.* 5. 22. *Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other mens sinnes.* Some think that here is meant *Imposition of hands in Ordination*, and some that it's meant *only of Confirmation*, and some of *Absolution*; but however, it will help us in the following Argument.

4. Scripture fully proveth that *Laying on of hands*, is a thing to be *continued* to *other Uses*, where the reason of continuance is the same: Therefore we are not to judge it ceased as to this use. This Text last named, shews that it is a *standing*, *or continued thing*; and if for *Absolution*, then for *Confirmation*; and if for *Ordination*, then *for both the other.*

So

So 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. sheweth, that the Presbytery did lay hands on *Timothy* in Ordination: And if it cease not to this, it ceaseth not to other continuing uses.

This much from Scripture, for Imposition of hands, is more then Nothing, though it may not be so full as you expected: But on the contrary, Nothing is brought to prove it unlawfull, that's worth the mentioning.

The last thing that I have to do, is to argue from the Practice of the Church, as the Exposition of these texts of Scripture. If the Universal Church of Christ have used Confirmation by Prayer, and Laying on of hands, as a Practice received from the Apostles, and no other beginning of it can be found; then have we no reason to think the Ceremony to beceased, or to interpret the forementioned Scripture, contrary to this Practice of the Universal Church: But the Antecedent is true, as I now come briefly to prove, supposing what Mr *Hanmer* hath said. It is commonly known, that the Ancienteſt Canons of the Church do speak of this as the unquestioned Practice and duty of the Church: So that to recite Canons were loss of time in so known a case. And if any say that Anointing and Crossing were Ancient; I Answer, 1. That *they were as ancient in the Popish use, as the Matter of a Sacrament,*

ment, *or as necessary signes*, is not true, nor proved, but disproved by our Writers, against the Popish Confirmation frequently. 2. Nor can it be proved that they were as Ancient as Indifferent things. 3. We prove the contrary, because they were never used in Scripture times, their being no mention of them. 4. So that we bring Antiquity but to prove the continuance of a Scripture Practice, and so to clear the sence of it: But the Papists plead the Fathers, for that which Scripture is a stranger to.

Greg. M. *in Epist. ad Quirin.* (*Leg. inter* Usserii Hybernic. *Epist.* 2. p. 6.) *Et quidem ab antiqua Patrum institutione didicimus, ut qui apud hæresin in Trinitatis Nomine Baptizantur, cum ad Sanctam Ecclesiam redeunt, aut unctione Chrismatis, aut Impositione manuum, aut solâ professione fidei, ad sinum matris Ecclesiæ revocentur.*

If *Ignatius ad Heronem Diaconum* be genuine, there's this testimony, *Nihil sine Episcopo operare. Sacerdotes enim sunt: tu autem Diaconus Sacerdotum: Illi baptizant, sacrificant, manus imponunt, tu autem ipsis ministra.* I recite it out of *Ushers'* Latin copy, as supposed the most pure.

Tertullian lib. *de Proscript.* cap. 36. appealing to the practice of the Apostle *John*, in the *Africane* Churches, mentioneth, as his

his Faith that he taught; one God the Creatour, and Jeſus Chriſt the Sonne of God, and the Reſurrection of the body, and that he joyned the Law and Prophets, with the Evangelical, and Apoſtolik Writings, and thence drunk this Faith: And of his Practice he ſaith, *Aquâ ſignat, Sancto Spiritu veſtit; Enchriſtiâ paſcit*; as three diſtinct Ordinances. *Lib. de Baptiſmo cap.* 8. Having mentioned Baptiſm, (and the Unction joyned to that, and not then to Confirmation) he addeth, *De hinc manus imponitur, per benedictionem advocans, & invitans Spiritum Sanctum.*

Idem de Reſur. Carn. cap. 8. *Sed & caro abluitur, ut anima emaculetur: Caro unguitur, ut anima conſecretur: Caro ſignatur, ut & anima muniatur: Caro manus Impoſitione adumbratur, ut & anima Spiritu illuminetur.*

Cyprian ad Stephan. Epiſt. 72: *Et ad ſubaian*, is too much for it. I will not trouble you in citing any Writers, ſince General Councels were in uſe, becauſe their teſtimony is enough. He that would ſee ſuch, may read *Barronius ad An.* 35. at large. So much for the proof of the *fitneſs of Impoſition of hands in Confirmation.*

I come now to the ſecond Part of my Propoſition,

position, *viz. That this Ceremony is not of such Necessity, as that such as scruple it, should be denied liberty of forbearing the reception of it, if they submit to the Ministerial tryal and Approbation of their Profession, and admission, and reception to Church-priviledges.*

For proof of this consider, 1. That we do not find that God any where Instituted this signe, as a matter of Necessity, still without interruption, to be used; but only that by holy men it was applyed as a convenient signe, or gesture to the works, in which they used it. Even as Lifting up of hands in Prayer was ordinarily used as a fit gesture, not wilfully to be neglected without cause, and yet not of flat necessity; or as kneeling in Prayer, is ordinarily meet, but not alway necessary. We find no more Scripture for the one then for the other: The Ancient Church also used it so variously, as that it is plain, they fixed it to no one case alone. Of the divers cases, in which they Imposed hands (on the Catechumens, and foure times on the Penitents, and divers other,) You may see in *Albaspinæus Observationes, Obs.* 31, 32. *& passim. Grotius* Epist. 154. p. 379. *Manus impositas baptizatis, nisi ab iis, qui jus haberent conferendi cœlestia illa dona, primis temporibus non apparet. Serius id introductum est in Episcoporum honorem, quo magis in Apostolicum*

Which

jus ſucceſſiſſe crederentur. Nec cauſa aberat, quam Cæremoniæ illi, velut naturalem diximus, præcandi ſcilicet Deum, ut ei qui baptizatus jam fidem erat Profeſſus, ea largiri vellet, quæ ad præſtandùm in fide, maximè in periculis gravibus, ſunt neceſſaria.

Which indeed ſheweth on one ſide, how cauſeleſs it is to queſtion the *Lawfullneſs* of it, any more then of Lifting up the the hands, or Kneeling; and yet how little reaſon there is on the other ſide, to make it a matter of ſtat neceſſity.

2. As we find that Kneeling in Prayer, and Lifting up the hands were oft omitted, ſo we find that ſometime the Holy Ghoſt is given before Baptiſm, or Impoſition of hands, *Acts* 10. And we find not that the Apoſtles uſed it to all (though I confeſs the Negative arguing is infirm, yet it ſeems not probable, that this was alwaies done.

3. It is ſomewhat ſuſpicious to find in *Juſtin Martyr's* deſcription, of the Chriſtian Churches Practices, no mention of this, nor any Sacrament, but Baptiſm, and the Lords Supper, nor any of the *Roman* Ceremonies: And *Irenæus*, and ſome other are ſilent in it.

4. God maketh no Ceremonies under the Goſpel ſo neceſſary, (except the two Sacraments) nor layeth ſo great a ſtreſs on them,

them as under the Law: And therefore we are not to interpret the Gospel as laying mens Salvation, or the Peace of the Church on any Ceremonies; unless we find it clearly expressed.

5. For all that I have said from Scripture for Imposition of hands in Confirmation, though the lawfulness of it is proved past doubt, yet the proofe of the duty of using it, is lyable to so many Objections, as that I must needs conclude, that the Gospel tenderness & the sense of our mutual infirmities, and our care of tender Consciences and of the Churches Peace, should restrain all the Sons of Piety and Peace, from making it a matter of flat Necessity, and forcing them that scruple it, to submit to it.

And now having said thus much of Imposition of hands, and Confirmation, as grounded on the Apostles example; I must againe and againe remember you, that this is in a manner but *ex abundanti*, and that the cause that I am pleading, doth not at all need it; but that I did before most clearly manifest the Truth of my position upon other grounds, upon which I shall proceed: and having shewed the Necessity of Ministerial judging of mens Profession, and the personal Covenanting of the Adult, and the Lawfullness of imposing hands therein, I go on as to the manner.

Prop. 14. *Though in Receiving Adult perſons out of Infidelity by Baptiſm into the Church; a ſudden Profeſſion without any ſtay to ſee their Reformation, may ſerve turn; yet in the receiving thoſe that were Baptized heretofore, into the Number of Adult-members, or to the Priviledges of ſuch, their lives muſt be enquired after, which muſt be ſuch as do not confute their Profeſſion.*

WE find in Scripture, that the Converted were ſuddenly Baptized, and they ſtayed not for any Reformation of life to go before. Indeed the Ancient Churches afterwards kept their Catechumens long in expectation; but that was not to ſee their lives firſt reformed, but that they might have time to teach them the Doctrine of Chriſt, which they muſt know before they could be Converts indeed. The Apoſtles did ſuddenly Baptize, converted Jews and Proſelites, becauſe they had ſo much preparatory knowledg, as that a ſhorter teaching might acquaint them with the Chriſtian doctrine. But the Heathens muſt

Leg. quæ habet Grotius *Diſcuſ. Apol.* Rivet. p. 235. *Cum antecedentib. ex Antiq. & de ſuis.*

must be long in learning so much as the Jews knew before Conversion.

Yet if the Catechumens did fall into gross sinne in time of their expectation and learning, they were so much the longer delayed, because it signifyed, that their first professed desires of entering into the Church, upon Christs terms, were not right.

But the Baptized stand upon other terms: For 1. They are already in Covenant with God the Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghost; and have renounced the flesh, the world, and the Devil, and promised obedience to God, and to live according to their Covenant. And this the Church hath still required of them, as I shewed out of *Justin Martyr*, and others before **Dionysius* (or whoever else) in *lib. de Hierarch. Eccles.* saith, *Ipse autem se omnino ea quæ tradentur, sequuturum esse pollicetur:* And *Ex eo præterea quærit, num ita instituat vivere, cum promisit asseverationibus*, &c. upon which saith *Albaspinæus*, *Quia scilicet fidem Christianam, Christianumque vivendi genus, & mores, sese complexos persequuturisque jucabant, antequam baptizarentur.* (*in* Tertul. *de Pœnit.* pag. 289.) *& Postea. Non accedebant*

* Read the whole order of Baptism in *Dionysius* ibid. *c.* 4.

cedebant ad Baptismum nisi de rebus fidei plam instructi, id est, de Dei magnitudine, & potestate rebusque quæ in Evangeliis continentur, uno excepto Eucharistiæ mysterio; neque baptizabantur, nisi postquam ea omnia se credere jurassent, quorum fides a fide pœnitentiæ incipiebat, &c. Et in sequ. *Incabant in Baptismo solennibus verbis, se nunquam* * *peccaturos; deinde renunciabant Diabolo & pompis ejus. Denique Censurâ, si peccarent post baptismum coercebantur.* So that men that are engaged in covenant with God, must keep Covenant, or manifest themselves Penitent, for the violation of it, before they are admitted to further Priviledges. There is a long time, in which they grow up from an Infant-state to an Adult; and how they live in that time, must be enquired after.

* That is not to turn to an ungodly life, but to endeavour and perform sincere obedience. Albaspin. *in* Tertul. *de Pœnitent.* cap. 7. *Sexcentis locis, non dicam hoc capite; unam ait tantum a lavacro veniam superesse, neque ullam primis illis temporibus inter privatam aut publicam graviorum criminum discrimen invenient. Vide cætera.*

2. Otherwise the Apostate would have equal Acceptance and Priviledges with the Faithful.

3. And so Penitence and Absolution would

would be excluded and confounded with meer Confirmation.

4. Moreover the Baptized are obliged to be responsible for their lives, being under the Government of Christs Ministers, and among his Saints.

5. For the sake of their own Souls, and of the Church and Ordinances, we must endeavour to preserve them from Corruption, which lying Professions would introduce; and therefore must not overlook, or neglect such Evidence as is within our reach.

6. Else Ministers that are by office to judg of their Profession, would be unfaithfull Judges, and forfeit their trust, if they shall wilfully neglect any Evidence within their cognisance, by which they may be enabled to judge.

But yet it is not the certainty of inward saving Grace, that we must find out by mens lives; for no man can have such certainty of another: but only that their lives be not such, as Null and Invalidate, and confute their Profession, and they live not in the perfidious violation of their Baptismal Covenant.

Prop. 15. *It is not of ſtat Neceſſity that the Profeſſion of the Expectant be made in the open Congregation, or before many, in order to his Confirmation and Admittance.*

PRoved, 1. It is not of Neceſſity, that Converted Infidels be admitted by Baptiſm into the ſtate of Adult-members, upon a Publique Profeſſion in a Congregation: therefore it is not of Neceſſity, that others be ſo admitted in Confirmation. The Antecedent is proved by the inſtance of the *Eunuch*, Acts 8. whom *Philip* Baptized in their way, and the *Jaylour* and his houſhold, *Acts* 16. Baptzed in the night at home. The Conſequence is proved by the propriety of reaſon and caſe.

2. If a man may by Confirmation be admitted into the Number of Adult Chriſtians, in the Church Univerſal, without being admitted into a particular Church, then his Profeſſion and Admiſſion need not (in that caſe) to be before the Congregation: But the Antecedent is true: as I prove thus. A man may by Adult Baptiſm, be admitted firſt into the Univerſal Church only: (As was the *Eunuch*, the *Jaylour*, *Lydia*, *Sergius Paulus*, and every firſt Convert in any City,

City, where the Apoſtles came:) Therefore a man may by Confirmation be admitted into the Number of the Adult, in the Catholick Church only: For the reaſon is the ſame, and the former admitteth them into the ſame number.

The Conſequence of the Major is plain. For no one Congregation more then another, can claim the cogniſance of the Admiſſion of a member into the Univerſal Church, or Confirming them in it.

3. Scripture hath no where made ſuch Publique Admiſſion to be of conſtant Neceſſity: therefore it is not ſo.

4. Elſe none could be Admitted, or Confirmed when perſecution hindereth Church Aſſemblies.

5. The Church is to believe and truſt the Paſtours, to whom it doth by office belong to try and admit them.

6. General unfixed Miniſters may thus try, approve, and confirm, who are not Paſtours of any particular Church: (ſuch as Apoſtles, Evangeliſts, and others were:) therefore they are not alwaies to do it before a particular Church: Nor indeed did they alway do ſo.

Prop. 16. *When a Person is admitted among the Adult-members of a Particular Church; as well as the Universal; his Profession and Admission must be either before the Church, or Satisfactorily made Known to the Church at least, Who must Approve of it by a Judgment of Discretion, in order to their Communion with him: and this among us is the ordinary case; because it is the duty of all that have opportunity, to joyn themselves to some particular Church; and it is in such Churches, that Communion in publique Worship and Order must be had; either statedly, or transiently and temporarily.*

1. THe solemnity it self of our Transition into the number of Adult-members, and their Communion, is of very great advantage, as I shall manifest more anon.

2. We that are commonly against the private Admission of Infants (at least except in some urgent case) have less reason to be for the private Transition and Admission of men among the Adult,

Read Dr *Hammond*'s Pract. Catech. *l.* 5. §. 4. *pag.* 298, 299. Of the Communion of Saints.

Albaspinæus *in* Tertul. de Pœnitent. *cap.* 8, 9. *pag.* 291. *Cum pro foribus Tem-*

Adult, and that into a particular Governed Church.

pli ſtarent pœnitentes, pretereuntibus ſacerdotibus, cæteriſque fidelibus omnibus, omnino dolentis animi ſignis pœnitentiam ſuam teſtabantur, lacrymis non parcebant, precibus inſtitebant, volvebantur, & ſi quæ aliâ habet pœnitentia, quæ miſereordiam movere poſſint; non omittebant, ut pacem recuperarent. Primum ante ſacerdotes procumbebant, martyribus deinde adgeniculabantur, cæteris denique fratribus & viduis, ut ait Pacianus, enixè ſupplicabant, ut à Deo & ab Eccleſiâ veniam pro ſe impetrarent.

3. The whole Society among whom ſuch a perſon is entered, do owe him much duty and brotherly aſſiſtance: They muſt Love him with a ſpecial Love: They muſt live, though not in a Levelling, yet in a Charitable Community with him, not ſhutting up the bowels of Compaſſion from him, when they ſee him in want, but relieving him, as if they ſufferd with him: They are not only to Love him, and Relieve him as a man; but as one of Chriſt's little ones, or friends; yea as his brethren, yea as loving and relieving Chriſt in them, *Matth.* 25. 35. to the end. They muſt receive and relieve a Diſciple in the name of a Diſciple. Beſides this, they muſt have Church-Union and Communion with him, as one Body; and muſt pray for him, and rejoice with him in Gods Praiſes, and

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the Lords Supper, and watch over him, and admoniſh and reprove him in ſinne, for his recovery; and avoid him if he walk diſorderly, and be impenitent in ſcandalous ſinne, *&c.*

Now 1. No man can perform all this duty, to a man that he knoweth not to be thus related to him: If he know not that he owes him this duty, any more then to any one elſe in the world, how ſhall he pay it him? To ſay that we are bound to take all men, that converſe with us, to be ſuch; is to ſay, that Chriſtians muſt renounce their witts, and turn the Church into Bedlam.

2. And as this proves, that the Church-members muſt be made known to one another, ſo it proves that they muſt have a Judgment of Diſcretion in receiving them: (though the Paſtours have the Judgment of Governing Direction.) For 1. God hath not left the Paſtours at liberty, to take in whom they Pleaſe; but hath deſcribed what Profeſſion they ſhall accept, or what perſons they ſhall admit, and whom they ſhall reject. If therefore the Paſtours go againſt the Word of God, then this following is the peoples duty: 1. If they know not the errour, or the caſe be doubtfull, they are to reſt in Obedience to their Paſtours, (for

that's

that's undoubtedly their duty) the work being the Paſtours and not theirs. 2. But if the caſe be plainly contrary to the Scripture, (as if he would admit an Impenitent Drunkard, Fornicatour, *&c.*) they muſt diſown his ſinne, that it lie not upon them, and refuſe private familiarity with that perſon; but not withdraw from publick Ordinances, becauſe of his preſence. For when they have done their duty, and rid themſelves of the guilt by a diſſent, the perſon is to them as Morrally abſent, though Locally and Phyſically preſent; and the Ordinance is not defiled to them by his Corporal preſence; but the guilt will lie on the Rulers of the Church: otherwiſe, all Churches ſhould be broken in pieces, if the people muſt ſeperate, when every one that they are confident is unworthy is Introduced: and the Governed will become the Governours. 3. But if it be not a few that the Paſtours thus introduce againſt the certain Word of God; but ſo many and ſuch as will corrupt the ſubſtance of the Church, and make it an uncapable matter for the form, and ſo to become another thing, and deſtroy the very Ends of Church-aſſociation, ſo that it is no longer a Communion of Saints; then the people fearing God, are bound to ſtop this

before

before it have quite corrupted the Church, by admonishing the Pastours, and advising with neighbour Churches to admonish them; and if that prevail not, by rejecting them: and if they cannot do so, by reason of a Major Vote of uncapable persons, they ought to withdraw themselves, and worship God in such a Church as is truly capable of the Name and Ends: And this is a Lawfull and Necessary separation; of which as it is a duty, God is the Cause; and as it is a forsaking of the rest, the culpable cause is only in themselves. I can easily prove all this, but that I think it needless tediousness.

Albaspin. *ubi sup. Animadvertendum est, pœnitentes non solum hæc & similia egisse, ut cum Deo in gratiam redirent, verum etiam ut sacerdotes, & cæteros fratres æquiores haberent, in quorum arbitrio & judicio nonnunquam erat, eos in Ecclesia revocare.*

I cite this to shew what Conisance the people were to have of such affairs.

4. And indeed it would be very hard measure, if at the corrupt administration or carlesness, or erroneous of a carnal, Pastour, all the Church must be under an Obligation to give their estates by way of relief to every one, that he will put the name of a Christian and Church member upon unworthily: Then may he force them to maintaine

tain all the beggars and rogues about them, though they were Infidels and impious men. I speak not of the common relief of the needy; for that I know they owe to an Infidel: but of the special Community, which Charity must make among the Disciples of Christ. It's against all Reason, that an erring or careless Pastour, shall thus Command all the Peoples estates, by introducing such without their consent, whom they are bound thus to maintaine.

5. Yea indeed, the Spirit of God, is in the Saints, a Spirit of discerning: so that it is not Possible that all the Church should in their Affections obey such a corrupt Administratour, by Loving all the notorious, ungodly men, as Saints, with the special Love of brethren, whom he will carelesly, or erroneously put in the place of Saints. I cannot possibly Love that man as a Saint, or Disciple of Christ, that I am certain is his enemy, and none such.

I conclude therefore, that though the people be not Church-governours by a Vote (that's a great errour) yet they have a Judgment of Discerning, according to which, they must obey, or reject their Pastours administrations. And he that denyeth this, and would have them yield an Absolute obedience,

dience, without trying, chooſing and refuſing, would not only make the Paſtours to be of a Papal ſtreine, but would give them Jeſuitical Obedience, above what the moderate Papiſts give the Pope. And therefore ſeeing that *ad finem* there is a Neceſſity that the People conſent, (or elſe they cannot Obey, nor hold communion with the perſon) therefore there is alſo the ſame Neceſſity *ad finem* that they have ſatisfaction offered them, and have either the cogniſance of the Profeſſion, and admiſſion of the perſon, or that they be ſatisfied in the fidelity of their Paſtours in Adminiſtration, and that he ſeek their conſent; or (which is beſt) that ſome choſen perſons do Repreſent them, and be preſent at ſuch Profeſſions with the Paſtours; and the Paſtours, and their own Delegates together, do acquaint the Congregation of all that are Admitted, and of their Satisfactory Prfeſſion, that they may hold Communion with them. This I ſpeak of thoſe (which are very many) that are fit for Church-communion, and yet through baſhfullneſs, or want of utterance, are unable to make a Publike Profeſſion before all (The choiſeſt Chriſtians that I have known, have been ſuch:) But thoſe that are able, ſhould rather in Publike make their own Profeſſion.

Object.

Object. *But what if one part of the Congregation approve of the Person and Profession, and the other disallow it?*

Answ. 1. They are to be governed by the Pastours. 2. And consult with the Pastours of Neighbour Churches, in cases of great weight and danger. 3. And the lesser part of the Church, in doubtfull cases, and tollerable differences, is to yield to the greater part: Not as if a Major Vote had the Government of the rest (much less of their Governours;) but in *Order* to *Unity* the fewer must submit.

Quest. *But what if the people would have the Pastour Baptize, Confirm, or introduce an open hereticke, or wicked person in his impenitency?*

Answ. The Pastour must obey God, and refuse to obey them.

Quest. *And what if the People think a man unfit, whom the Pastour would Approve and Introduce?*

Answ. 1. He may admit him into the Universal Church: notwithstanding their unjust refusall. 2. He hath power to Admit him into that particular Church, against their unjust dissent, as he is the Ruler of the Church, and the Administratour of the Ordinances. 3. He hath Authority to perswade

swade and command them from Christ, to hold communion with the person, and do their duty to him: which if they do not they commit a double sinne: one of unjustice and uncharitableness, in a causless rejecting of a member of Christ; and another of disobedience, against the fifth Commandement. 4. But yet the Pastours cannot force the people to obey their advice, and command, nor effectually procure it perhaps. 5. And therefore their forementioned Power is not alwaies to be exercised. For it is in vaine to use a means, that will rather hinder the End then attain to it; and so is at that time, no means. Sometimes the Pastour may see just cause to exercise all this Power, and execute his part of Church communion with the person, in administring the Ordinances to him, and leave the people answerable to God, for refusing their part: But this is not an usual case: Usually, if he see the People resolve against Communion, with that person (how fit soever,) he is publickly to cleare himself by disallowing them in their sinne, and reproving them for it, and leaving the blame on them; and then in Prudence to forbear the Intruding of the person; because no duty is at all times a duty to be performed; and especially when the hurt

hurt that will follow upon it, in the divisions of the Church, is like to be far greater then the good, if it be done. 6. But if the Church should be so corrupted, as that the Major Vote doth set against Faith and Godlines as such, and so will not admit a sound member to be added to them, the Pastour with the Minor part, may after due Admonition and Patience, as justly reject the guilty and obstinate, as if they were but one man, and not a Major part.

What is said of this case of Admission, holds also of Rejection by Excommunication, and of other Antecedent acts of Discipline.

4. Lastly, If Excommunication must usually be done in publique, before the whole Church, that they may know whom to avoid, and know the Reason of it; then Admission must usually be done in publique (the Person or the Pastour, opening the case to the people) that they may know whom to have Communion with; and know the Reason of it: but the Antecedent is confessed by almost all. And its proved plainly by *Paul's* practice and direction, 1 *Cor* 5. throughout: And it was the custom of the Christian Churches in *Tertullians* daies, *Apolog. cap.* 39. *There also (in the Christian meeting for*

Worship) are exercised exhortations, castigations and the Divine Censure: for Judgment is passed with great deliberation, or weight, as with men that are assured of the presence, or sight of God: and it is the highest Representation of the Judgment to come, if any one so offend, as that he be discharged, or banished from Communion of Prayer, and of the Assembly, and of all holy Commerce, or fellowship.

Abundance more out of *Cyprian*, and others might be easily produced, to prove that this which I have spoken, was the ancient intereſt of the people in theſe Church-affaires: Yea in the choiſe of their Paſtours, yea and in rejecting unworthy Paſtours, *Cyprian* ſaith, they had a chief Intereſt: Not by Ruling Power, but by a prudent exerciſe of obedience, chooſing the good, and refuſing the evil. Self-preſervation is naturall to every body, where it is not by evil means, and to the hurt of the Publike State. It's hard if a Natural body may not lawfully refuſe, or caſt up Poiſon, if a Governour ſhould give it them. God bindeth none to the perdition of their Souls; nor any holy Society to deſtroy it ſelf, or ſuffer it ſelf to be deſtroyed, or corrupted by others, without the uſe of all juſt means, to reſiſt the bane.

bane. But of this I shall desire the Reader, that would know the Judgment and Practice of the Ancient Church, to peruse Dr *Blondel de Jure plebis in Regimine Ecclesiast.* adjoyned to that excellent piece of *Grotius de Imperio summarum Potestatum circa Sacra.*

To recite more after all those of *Blondel*, is but to do a needless work. There's enough to satisfie all that are moderate for Popular Interest.

This much may satisfie you, that it should not be usually a secret but a solemn Transition from an Infant-state of membership, into an Adult-state; and that by a publike Profession or Notification of it, the particular Church should have satisfaction herein.

Prop 17. *It is convenient, though not of Necessity, that every Church do keep a Register, of all that are admitted thus into the Number of the Adult-members.*

AS we were wont to keep a Register of the Infants Baptized, so have we as much Reason, of the Adult, Approved and Confirmed or Restored. Corporations of old, were wont to keep a book of the names of their Burgesses or Citizens: in respect to

which, God is said to have a Book of Life, wherein he writes mens names, and out of which he blots them, speaking after the manner of men. The Church hath great reason for this practice, the business being of so great weight; that we forget not who are of our Communion: which without a Register, in great Congregations, must needs be done. If any be so vaine, as to demand a Scripture-proofe of this; let him first bring me a Scripture-proofe, that he may read with spectacles, or write a Sermon from the Preachers mouth, or use Notes in the Pulpit, or print, *&c.* and then I will give him proofe of this: In the mean time, if this do not satisfie him, he shall have liberty to disuse it.

Prop. 18. *Those that were never thus Ministerially and Explicitly Approved, Confirmed or Absolved (after an ungodly life,) but have been permitted without it, to joyne ordinarily with the Church in Prayer and Praises, and have been admitted to the Communion of the Church, in the Lords Supper, are approved and confirmed, Eminently though not Formally: though in so doing, both the Pastours and themselves did sin against God, by the violation of his holy Order. So that such may be a true Church, though much corrupted or disordered.*

THis I adde for two Reasons: 1. To confute them that say our Churches are no true Churches, for want of an explicite Profession. 2. And to acquaint you who it is among us, that are, or are not to be called to Confirmation.

1. It is not the degree of clearness and openness in our Profession, or in the Ministerial Approbation or Admission, that is Essential to a Church-member. An obscure Profession may be truly a Profession. Some obscure Profession, hath been ordinarily made by our people in this Land heretofore,

by their ordinary hearing the Word, and standing up at the Recital of the Creed; and joyning with the Church in Prayer and Praise, and confessing the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and acknowledging the Ministry: And a further Profession they made, by actual receiving the Lords Supper, which is a silent Profession of their Faith in Christ. And though they were not solemnly Approved and Confirmed, (except that one of many, had a Cerimonious Confirmation from the Bishop in their Childhood) yet were they Actually admitted to daily Communion with the Church, and the special part of Communion in the Lords Supper. And though this Profession and admission was lamentably defective, (of which more anon) yet it is such as may prove our ordinary Assemblies to have been true Churches.

☞ 2. And I do not think it fit, that any that have been already admitted to Church-communion in the Lords Supper, should be now called out to Confirmation, by Imposition of hands; though where there is just cause to question their Knowledg, Faith, or lives, they may by the Postour be called to give an account of them; and put upon a clearer Profession then they have yet made: But sure when they have been admitted

ted to the Lords Supper, by any regular Miniſtry and Church, they are to be taken for Adult-members, till they are juſtly caſt out, or do caſt out themſelves. For the more Perfect doth include the leſs Perfect in it: If a man be ordained a Presbyter, that was never ordained Deacon, he is not to be called back againe and made a Deacon. If you make a man free of your Trade, before he was ever bound prentice; you cannot call him back againe, and bind him prentice after this. If the Univerſity give a man the Degree of Doctor of Divinity, or Maſter of Arts, that never took Degree of Batchelour of Divinity, or of Arts, they cannot afterwards call him back to take his Batchelours Degree. If you have irregularly admitted the untryed, unapproved, unconfirmed to the Lord Supper, you have *Eminenter*, though not *Formaliter* Confirmed and Approved him though irregularly. Of this more anon.

Prop. 19. *So exceeding great and many are the mischiefs that have befallen us, by the neglect of a solemn meet Transition from an Infant, into the Adult Church state, and which undoubtedly will continue, till they be remedyed, that all Magistrates, Ministers, and People, that dissemble not, in professing themselves to be Christians, should with speed and diligence attempt the Cure.*

LEt us here take a view of the case of our Nation, and Congregations, and then consider of the effects and consequents.

All the people of our Parishes, (except *Anabaptists*) do bring their Children to be Baptized; which if it were faithfully done, were a happy means of an early engagement unto Christ, and a happy enterance upon further mercy.) Multitudes of those know not what Baptism is, nor to what use and end it is appointed, nor what benefit their Children may receive by it: (I speak upon too sure and large experience) nor do they know what Christianity is, nor who Jesus Christ is, nor what it is, that they are to do in Baptism: But there they make a promise customarily, as they are bid, in words not under-

understood, that they will acquaint their children at age with the Covenant there made (which they never understood themselves) and that they will educate them in Godlineſs, when they hate Godlineſs at the heart. And when they come home, they performe their promiſe accordingly: They teach them nothing of the Doctrine of Chriſtianity, and the life to come, but they give them up to the fleſh and the world, which there in words they did renounce; and they teach them by their daily examples to curſe, and ſwear, and raile, and to be proud and covetuous, and voluptuous, ſerving their bellies in ſtead of God; and hateful reproaching a godly life, inſtead of teaching it their Children. Theſe Children are cuſtomarily brought to the Aſſemblies, where they heare the plaineſt teaching, without underſtanding, or regarding it, and grow hardened under daily reproofs and exhortations; living as their Parents taught them, ſome in groſs ignorance and worldlyneſs, without any ſignes of Godlyneſs, further then to come to Church; ſome in Drunkenneſs, ſome in Whoredom, abundance in a malignant hatred of a holy life, making them that uſe it the common ſcorne, and taking them for the hatefulleſt perſons in the Pariſh, or Country

where

where they live: For custome sake, and to quiet their Conscience in their sinne, they will come to the Lords Table, if they be admitted by the Pastour, and may have it in their mode and way: And if a Minister shall desire them to come to him first, that he may understand their knowledg and Profession, they scorn it; and ask him by what Authority he would examine them, and what proof he hath that men must be examined, before they be admitted to the Lords Supper? And some self-conceited, half-witted Writers have taught them this lesson, and made Ministerial tryal and Approbation odious to them. But because they were once Baptized, and have since come to hear and joyne with us in the Assembly, therefore they think that they have right to all Ordinances, and are true Christians and Adult members of the Church; and also exempt from the Government of the Pastours, that require them to submit to the means of their own good. In the Bishops daies, some few of them were Confirmed: (in the Country where I lived, about one of ten or twenty) and what that was, and how it was done I can tell you, but what I once made tryall of. When I was a Schoole-boy, about 15 years of age, the Bishop coming into the Country, many

went

went in to him to be Confirmed: we that were boies, runne out to see the Bishop among the rest, not knowing any thing of the meaning of the business: when we came thither, we met about thirty or fourty in all, of our own stature and temper, that had come for to be Bishopt, as then it was called. The Bishop examined us not at all in one Article of the Faith; but in a Church-yard, in hast, we were set in a rank, and he past hastily over us, laying his hands on our head, and saying a few words, which neither I nor any that I spoke with, understood; so hastily were they uttered, and a very short prayer recited, and there was an end. But whether we were Christians or Infidels, or knew so much as that there was a God, the Bishop little knew, nor enquired. And yet he was one of the best Bishops esteemed in *England*. And though the Canons require, that the Curate or Minister send a Certificate that children have learnt the Catechism; yet there was no such thing d one, but we runne of our own accord to see the Bishop only; and almost all the rest of the County, had not this much: This was the old careless practice of this Excellent Duty of Confirmation. Some few (perhaps halfe a Parish in the best places) will send their children to Church, to be cate-

catechized yet; but even those few that lear
the words for the most part understand no
what they say, and are as ignorant of th
matters, as if they never learnt the words
This is the common way, by which our Pa
rishes come to be Churches, and our people
to be Christians; supposing some to be mix
among them, that are more Faithfully de
voted to God in Baptism, and better educa
ted, in the feare of God.

2. Now let us see what are the real, visi
ble, undenyable fruits of this defective sin
ful course. Because men build upon this *Fun
damental falshood*, that infant Baptism upon
the Parents Profession, doth give them
right to the Church-state and Priviledges o
the Adult, without any personal Professio
and Covenanting with God, when they com
to the use of reason; which the Church m
have cognisance of; and so they that entre
somewhat more Regularly into an Infant
Church state, do become Adult-members
secretly, unobservedly, and no body well
knows how: Hereupon it followeth,

1. That our Churches are lamentably cor
rupted and diseased, (though they are true
Churches, and have Life in them) while
they are made so like the unbelieving and un
godly world; and the Garden of Christ is
made

made too like the common wilderneſs. For Heathens, and Impious perſons, and all ſorts of the unclean (almoſt) are the members of them, where Pariſhes, or Pariſh-meetings are made convertible with Churches. I would make the caſe neither worſe nor better then it is. Till within theſe few years, I knew but very imperfectly how it is, and I thought the caſe had been better with ſome, and worſe with others then I have found it upon tryall. And had I not ſet upon the duty of Perſonal inſtruction, I ſhould never have known the ſtate of the people: But now we have dealt with them almoſt all in private perſonally, I ſhall truly tell you the ſtate of this Pariſh, by which you may conjecture at the reſt of the Nation. I know not a Congregation in *England* that hath in it Proportionably ſo many that fear God: and yet our whole Pariſh conſiſteth of all theſe ſorts following. 1. Among eight hundred Families, there are about five hundred perſons, ſuch as the vulgar call preciſe, that are rated to be ſerious Profeſſours of Religion, (or perhaps ſomewhat more) Theſe live in Unity, and ſeem to me to ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs; and are of as peaceable, harmleſs, humble Spirits, and as unanimous without inclination to Sects, or

Often-

Oſtentation of their parts, as any people know. 2. Beſides theſe there are ſome competent Knowledg and exterior perfo mances, and lives ſo blameleſs, that we c gather from them no certain Prooſe, or vi lent Preſumption that they are ungodly, o that their Profeſſion is not ſincere. So m ny of theſe joyning with the reſt, as mu about ſix hundered, do own their Church membership, and conſent to live under much of Church-Order and Government, unqueſtionably belongeth to Presbyters exerciſe, and to be my Paſtoral charg

3. Beſides theſe, there are ſome that ar tractable and of willing minds, that by thei expreſſions ſeem to be ignorant of the ver Eſſentials of Chriſtanity; which yet I find t have obſcure conceptions of the truth, whe I have condeſcendingly better ſearcht them, and helped them by my enquiries. Theſe al- ſo (as weak in the Faith) we receive. * 4. Some there are that are of com- petent underſtandings, and of lives ſo blameleſs, that we durſt not reje them; but they hold o themſelves, becauſe they are taught to queſtion, i not

* Of this fourth ſort I hope are many that truly fear God, that ſome on one pretence, and ſome on an other, for- bear to joyn with us in the Communi- on of the Church, in the Lords Sup-

not to disown our Administrations; for all that, we give liberty to all that in tollerable things do differ. 5. Some there are, that are secret Heathens, believing with *Aristotle*, that the world was from Eternity; making a scorn of Christ, and *Moses*, and Heaven, and Hell, and Scripture, and Ministers, and all Religion; thinking that there is no Devill, no Immortality of the Soul, or Everlasting Life: But this they reveale only in secret, to those that they find capable, by viciousnes, unsetlednes, or any malignity, or discontent against the Godly, or the Orders of the Church: And yet for the hiding of their minds, they will hear and urge us to baptize their children, and openly make the most Orthodox Confessions, and secretly deride it when they have done, as I can prove. And this is the only differing party among us, in Judgment and designe, that is in danger of leavening many, that God forsaketh. 6. many there are that have tollerable

per: but yet heare, and live in love and peace with us. And some do joyn with us (on the grounds as godly strangers may be admitted) somtime in the Lords Supper; that yet expresly own not a membership in the particular Church.

As I would not have mentioned the faults of any of my Parishioners, but on this necessity of

knowledg,

opening the state of the Nation *de facto*, so they have no reason to take it ill of me. For 1. I accuse none by name, much less the Generality. 2. The Innocent do themselves know, and bewail the sinnes that I mention. 3. I am so far from making them worse then other Parishes, that I unfeignedly profess, that I do not know any other in *England* of so much Godliness, and tractableness; which testimony is true, and more to their honour, then the mentioning of the remnants of ignorance and ungodlyness is to their dishonour. If it be thus, here, how much worse is it in most parts of the Land?

knowledg, and live in some notorious, scandalous sins: some in gross Covetuousness, and these will not be convinced: some in common drunkenness, and those will confess their faults, and promise amendment a hundred times over, and be drunk within a few daies againe; and thus have spent the most part of their lives: some in a constant tipling, drinking as great a quantity, but bearing it better away: some in ordinary swearing, cursing, ribaldry, whoredomes sometimes. Many in neglect of all Family-duties, and the Lords Day: and some in hatefull, bitter scorn at Prayer, holy Conference, Church-Order and holy living, and the people that use it; sometimes rising up in tumults against the Offi-

cers

cers that endeavour to punish a drunkard, or Sabboth breaker, and resisting them, and seeking the ruine of the Officers. 7. Some there are that are of more tractable dispositions, but really know not what a Christian is: that heare us from day to day, yea and some few of them learn the words of the Catechisme, and yet know not almost any more, then the veryest Heathen in *America*. They all confess, that we must mend our lives, and serve God: but they know not that God is Eternal, or that Christ is God, or that he is man, but say, he is a Spirit; some say neither God nor man; some say God and not man; some say man and not God: abundance say, He was man on earth, but now he is not: Abundance know not what He came to do in the world: nor that there is any satisfaction made for sinne, but what we must make our selves; and they tell me, they trust to nothing for Pardon and Salvation, but Gods Mercy, and their good serving him (which is only saying every night and morning in bed, or as they undress them, the Lords Prayer, and the Creed for a Prayer, and comming to Church.) They say openly, they do not know of any surety that we have, or any that hath borne the punishment of our sinne, or suffered for us: And when I

repeat the History of the Incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Christ to them, they stand wondering, and say, they never heard it before: what the Holy Ghost is, they know not: nor what Sanctification, Faith, or Justification is: nor what Baptism is; nor the Lords Supper; nor to what use, but in general, *for our Salvation*. What a Church is, they know not; nor what is the Office of Pastour or People, save only to preach and hear, and give and receive the Sacraments. If I ask them what Christianity is, the best answer is, that it is a serving God as well as we can, or as God will give us leave. So that there is scarce an Article of the Creed, or very few that they tolerably understand. Nay one of about fourescore yeares of age (now dead) thought Christ was the Sunne, that shineth in the Firmament, and the Holy Ghost was the Moone. 8. Many there be, that joyne this Heathenish ignorance, and wicked obstinacy together; hating to be instructed; scorning to come neer me, to be taught, and to be told of their sinne, when they come. They will raile at us bitterly behind our backs, if we will not let them have their own will and way about the Sacraments, and all Church-affaires: but they will not submit

mit to that Teaching, that ſhould bring them to know what Chriſt or Chriſtianity is. 9. Some there be that are of tollerable knowledg, and no Drunkards, nor Whoremongers that the world knoweth of, but of more plauſible lives, and have ſome formes of Prayer in their families: but yet live in idle or tipling company, or ſpend their lives in vanity, and hate more a diligent ſerving of God, and heavenly life, then the open Drunkars do: Theſe make it their work to poſſeſs people with a hatred of ſtrict Profeſſours, and of our Churches and Adminiſtrations, and to that end get all the books that are written for admitting all to the Lords Table, that they can light of; and contrary to the Authors meanings, they make them Engines to harden others in their Impiety, and hatred of Reformation: The like uſe they make of the Writings of many Diſſenting Divines, about Church-governemnt; or any from whence they may fetch matter of reproach againſt the Paſtours and Ordinances among us. 10. Another ſort there are, that are

I have but very few of theſe; but I know neighbour Pariſhes that have too many, to the grief of their godly Miniſters.

This tenth ſort, are ſome of them infected by the Infidels (who are all for deeply

Hobs his Necessity) but most of them have got it, I know not how: but so many are possessed by these conceits, that I little thought, that neer so many of the ungodly vulgar, had so abused the Doctrine of Predestination and Grace; as if they had been hired to disgrace it.

deeply possest with a conceit, that God having determined before we are borne, whether we shall be saved or not, it is in vaine to strive; for if we be predestinated, we shall be saved what ever we do; and if we be not, we shall not, what ever we do; and that we can do nothing of our selves, nor have a good thought, but by the Grace of God, and if God will give it us, we shall have it; and the Devil cannot prevaile against him; but if he will not give it us, it's in vaine to seek it; for it is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth Mercy; and therefore they give up themselves to security and ungodlinesse, because they cannot do nothing of themselves. And thus by misunderstanding some Texts of Scripture, and abusing some Truths of God, they are hardened in ungodlinesse, thinking that all is long of God: and they will not so much as promise Reformation, nor promise to use the means, because they say, they cannot tell whether God will put it into their hearts: and

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it is all as he will. 11. Besides these, there is one or two honest, ignorant Professours, that are turned *Anabaptists*, and joyne with the Church of them in the next Parish. 12. And some *Papists* are among us; and whether only those that stay from the Assemblies, I cannot say.

Of these twelve sorts of People, this Parish is composed; which I therefore mention, that the state of our Parishes may be truly known; while others are compared with this: For every one hath not had the opportunities which I have had, to know all their people, or the most.

12. Our Papists are but few; but if the rest of them be such as ours, their Church hath small reason to boast of its Holiness.

Beside, if all these were fit to be members, yet we must know their own consent, which meer living in the Parish, or comming to Church doth not signifie.

And now if all these are fit to go for Christians, then must we make a new kind of Christianity; and a new Gospel, and a new Christ. And if all these are fit to be Church-members, then we must make a new kind of Churches?

And why then may not those be Christians and Church-members, that never heard of the Name of Christ, as well as many of these?

2. By this untried Entrance of all sorts into our Churches, we bring a dishonour on the very Christian Name, and so on the Lord Jesus himself, and on his Gospel and holy wayes. Christianity is not a matter of meer Opinion: Christ came not into the world only to perswade men to have high thoughts of him, but to save his people from their sinnes, and to destroy the works of the Devil. And when the Church of Christ shall be turned into a den of thieves, or a sty of swine, what a great dishonour is it to the Lord? As if we would perswade the world, that his servants are no holier then others, and differ but in an Opinion from the world. Christ needeth not Disciples, and therefore will not take in all that refuse to come upon his terms; but hath fixed his terms, and will have only those that will yield to them. Though I abhorre the rigor of the contrary extreame, that would make the Church narrower then it is, and pinne it up in so small a number, as would tempt men to doubt of Christianity it self; and teacheth men to exclude their bretheren, meerly because they are themselves uncharitable Judges, when they are not able to disprove their Profession; yet must I also detest this horrible dishonouring of the Lord, as if his Body were

were no better than the army of the Devil.

3. And by this means the Heathens, Jews, Mahometans and all Infidels are exceedingly hindred from believing in Christ; when they can say as the Turks, when men question their fidelity; *what? dost thou think I am a Christian?* He that knows any thing of Religious affaires, knoweth that commonly the first thing that draweth men to any party, is the liking of the *Persons* and their *Practices*; from whence they grow to enquire with inclination into their doctrines. The Ancient Christians that lived before the daies of *Constantine*, did bring Christianity into reputation by their *Holiness*, and God was then more eminently seen among them. But when the countenance of the Emperour, and worldly advantages had drawn in all men to the Church, and the Bishops did set the door too wide open, Christianity lookt like another thing, and that inundation of wickedness overspread the Church, which *Salvian* and so many more complaine of. Our likliest way to win the Jews, and all Infidels to the Church, is by shewing them the true Nature of Christianity in the Church-members.

4. Hereby also we confound the ancient Order of *Catechumens*, or *Expectants* with

the true members of the Church, and lay the Church and the porch, yea and the Church-yard, if not the commons, all together. By which also our Preaching and Administrations are confounded: so that whereas the Ancient Churches had their Common Sermons (and some Prayers) which were fitted to the unconverted or Expectants; and had also both Doctrine, Praiers, Praises, and other worship, proper to the Church (especially on the Lords Daies) we must now speak to all, and joyn with all; and the Church, and the Enemies of the Church must sing the same Praises, as if they were one body. And God is not the God of confusion but of order in the Churches. He that put two sorts of Preaching and Doctrine into the Apostles Commission, *Matth.* 28. 19, 20. One for making Disciples and another for the edifying and guidance of Disciples, did never intend, that these should be confounded.

5. And then by this means, the Souls of millions of poore people are deprived of the great benefits of the Ordinances and Administrations suitable to their state. The begetting Word goeth before the feeding, strengthning Word, even before the milk for babes. The laying of the foundation

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must go before our building thereon. Every one will thrive best in his Own Element and place. A fish will not prosper on dry land, nor a man under water. The womb is the only place for the Embrio and unborn child, though not for those that have seen the Sun. If you will break the shell before the Chicken be hatcht, that you may hasten its production, or honour it with a premature association with the rest that see the Sunne, your foolish charity will be the death of it. And so deale abundance of mistaken Zealots with the Souls of men; who cry out against the wisest and most conscionable Ministers, as if they were unchristning the People, and undoing the world, because they would feed them with food convenient for them, and will not be such hasty midwives, as to cast the mother into her throws, if not rip her up, that shee may have the child at her breasts, which should yet be many daies or moneths in the womb. Moreover they thus cause our people, to lose all that benefit of preparations, and solemn Engagement to Christ: of which more anon among the Benefits.

6. By this means also the Souls of our poor people are deluded, and they are made believe that they are Christians when they

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are not, and in a state of Salvation, when it's no such thing. As Mr *Thorndicke* saith (as aforecited) *No man is to be admitted to the Assemblies (or visible societies of Christians) till there be just presumption that he is of the Heavenly Jerusalem that is above:* —— *And admitting to, and excluding from the Church is, or ought to be a just and Lawful presumption, of admitting to, or excluding from Heaven: It is morally and legally the same act that entitleth to Heaven, and to the Church, that maketh an heir of life Everlasting and a Christian:* —— And if so, then what greater mischief can we do the Soul of an ungodly man, then so to delude him, by our admitting him into the Church, and make him believe he is in a state of Salvation, when it's no such thing? False faith, and false hopes, are the things that fill Hell, and are the common undoing of the world: And all that ever we can do, is too little to cure it. When I bend all my studies and labours, but to make a wicked man know that he is wicked, I cannot procure it. I can make him believe that he is a sinner, but not that he is an unconverted, ungodly sinner, and in a state of

Mr *Thorndicke*, see Dr *Hammond's* Practic. Catech. *lib.* 2. §. 2. *p.* 103. & *l.* 6. §. 2. *pag.* 311, 313, 314, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, &c.

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Condemnation. O the power of blinding self-love! that will not suffer them to see themselves miserable, when they see themselves sinfull, and all because they would not have it so; when yet it's most visible to others. And shall we all joyne to strengthen this potent Enemy? and lay this snare, and thrust men headlong into Hell, that are running down-hill so fast already: and all under pretence of Charity and Compassion?

7. We shall put them by this means into a way, not only of losing the fruit of Ordinances, but of misapplying all to the increasing of their deceit: When we preach Peace to the true believer, the wicked will misapply it, and say, it belongs to them: When we speak against the unbelievers and ungodly, they'l think that this is not their part, but bless themselves because they are Christians. In our praises they are tempted with the Pharisee to thank God, and perhaps for mercies which they never had, as Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, *&c.* The Sacraments by misapplication will confirm them in Presumption. And thus as they enter by deceit, among Adult-believers, so will they turn all the Ordinances of God, and the Priviledges of the Church to feed that deceit, more effectuall then among the expectants

pectants it would have been.

8. But the greatest mischief that troubleth me to think of, is this; that by this hastening and admitting all the unprepared into the Number of Adult-Christians, and members of the Church; we do either put a necessity upon our selves to throw away Church-discipline, or else to be most probably the damnation of our peoples Souls, and make them desperate, and almost past all hope or remedy. I must confess, that what I am saying now, I was not sensible of, till lately that experience made me sensible: While I medled not with Publike reproofs or censures, I disputed of these things, without that experience, which I now find is one of the greatest helps to resolve such doubts, which makes me bold to tell the Church, that the Practice of so much Discipline as we are agreed in, is a likelyer way, to bring us all to agreement in the rest, then all our Disputings will do without it: And that I resolve hereafter, to take that man for an incompetent Judge, and unmeet Disputer about Church-discipline, that never exercised it, or lived where it was exercised: And I shall hereafter suspect their judgments, and be almost as loath to follow such, as to follow a swimmer, that never was before in the water,

ter, or a Pilote that was never before at sea; or a Souldiour that never saw warres before, but have only learned their skill by the Book. Our case stands thus: If we take all our Parishes according to the old Church-constitution, to be particular Churches, and all the Parishiones to be members, then either we must exercise the Discipline which Christ hath commanded, or not. If not, then we disobey our Lord and Master, and own such a Church, as is utterly uncapable of Church-ends, and consequently of the essence, seeing that it is a Relative being. For it's supposed that it is not for any unusual accident, that we cannot exercise this Discipline, but from the very Church constitution, or incapacity of the matter. And then 1. We shall be Traitours to Christ, under the name of Pastours, if we will wilfully cast out his Ministerial, Kingly Government. 2. We shall betray the Church to licentiousnes. And 3. We shall set up a new Church-way, which is contrary, to that which hath been practised in all ages, from the Apostles daies, till impiety had overspread the Christian world. He that dare take on him to be an Overseer and Ruler of the Church, and not to oversee and rule it, and dare *settle* on such a Church-state, as is uncapable of Discipline,

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is so perfidious to Christ, and ventur so boldly, to make the Church ano thing, that I am resolved not to be his lower.

But if we shall exercise the Discipline Christ upon all in our ordinary Paris what work shall we make? I will tell y what work, from so much experience, that no reasonings can any more persu me to believe the contrary, then that wor wood is not bitter, or snow not cold.

1. We shall have such a multitude to excom municate, or reject that it will make the s tence grow almost contemptible by the co monness. 2. We shall so extreamly e rage the spirits of the people, that we sh go in continual danger of our lives: Amo so many that are publikly reproved, and c out, it's two to one, but some desper villains will be studying revenge. But this is nothing: but th which sticks upon m heart is this: 3. We sha be the cruellest enemies t the Souls of our poor peo ple in the world: and p them the very next ste to Hell. For as soon as ever we have re ted them, and cast them under publiqu shame

This is no dishonour to the Discipline: for we find it hath great effect on such as are capable of it.

shame, they hate us to the heart, and either will never heare us more, or heare us with so much harted and malice, or bitterness of spirit, that they are never like to profit by us. If you say that doubtless Discipline will have better fruits, if it be an Ordinance of God: I Answer 1. It's no time now in the end of the world, to question whether that be an Ordinance of God, which Scripture speaks for so fully, and so plainly; and which the Catholike Church hath so long practised, and that with such severity as it hath done. 2. I know the Discipline is of excellent use, and is likely to have excellent effects: But upon whom? Upon such as are fit to come under Discipline, and with such I have seen the usefulness of it: but with the rest it makes them next to mad. They that before would patiently hear me, in the plainest, sharpest Sermons that I could preach, and would quietly bear any private admonition, when once they are publikly admonished and cast out, are filled with the gall of malice and indignation, and never more likely to profit by a Sermon. Nay they set themselves with malice, to reproach and oppose, and stir up others; and fall in to any party, that will receive them that are enemies to the Ministry: so that I looke upon

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some of them, when once they are cast out, almost as if they were already in Hell: For they are desperately hardened against any further means of their recovery. 3. Yea I am perswaded, that if we exercise Christs Discipline according to the Scripture Rule, upon all in the Parishes in *England*, it would endanger a rebellion; and the rage of the people would make them ready, to take any opportunity to rise up against the Soveraigne Power, that doth maintaine and protect us; and if we were not protected, we should soone have enough of it.

Object. Perhaps you'l say, that *publike admonitions, and Church censures are not to be easily exercised, nor upon any but notorious, scandalous sinners, and that in case of obstinate impenitency.*

Answ. I am as much against a rash, unnecessary censure, or use of the severity of Discipline, as another: I know that a fly must not be killed with a beetle. Let it be exercised but according to the Parliaments Ordinance, called *The form of Church-Government, to be used in the Church of England and Ireland*, Aug. 29. 1648. Or let it be exercised but with one half, or the sixth part of the severity of the Ancient Canons of the Church, and you shall certainly see the effects

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that I tell you of. Do you think to use it but with few, when Impenitent, scandalous sinners are so many? But perhaps you think to use it only *in terrorem* or now and then one, and let others alone that are in the same case. But 1. That's the same disobedience to God, as to use it upon none at all. He that hath commanded us to *reject a Heretick*, to *have no company with the disorderly* livers, to *turn away from* scandalous, ungodly men, and *not to enter with drunkards, railers*, &c. hath not bid us do thus by some but by all. 2. God condemneth partiality. 3. Your Partiality will presently be so noted by men, that it will turn to your reproach, and make both you and your Discipline odious, when they can say, *He cast out one, and forbeareth others in the same case.*

Object. *But were there not more offenders then the incestuous man at Corinth? And yet Paul casteth out but him.*

Answ. 1. How can you tell how many *Paul* cast out? 2. Doth he not give the Church a flat command to cast out and avoid the rest, 1 *Cor.* 5. 11, 12. When will you make us believe, that *Paul* at that time commanded them to do that which he would not have them do? 3. *Corinth* had many of-

ſendours, whom *Paul* in that Epiſtle reprehendeth: but can you prove that any of them were obſtinately Impenitent, after admonition? I know you cannot.

But perhaps you'l think that you ſhould by the preparatory, private admonition ſo bow them, and work upon them, that few of them ſhould be ſo obſtinate as to fall under cenſure.

I anſwer, You ſpeak this becauſe you never tried, and know not the world. I muſt preſume to tell you (though to tell you the reaſons be unmeet) that there's but few men in *England* muſt expect more advantages for Intereſt in their people, then I have in mine: and yet all's nothing, when I come to exerciſe Diſcipline, and croſs their ſelfiſh, ſenſual inclinations. Thoſe that will tell me, they are beholden to me for their lives, yet will not heare me when I perſwade them to any humbling confeſſion. Thoſe that cannot hide their ſinne, will confeſs it, and commit it over and over: will you accept of their private Confeſſion for Satisfaction, that will publickly ſlander their Neighbours, or be drunk openly every week or month, or ſwear every day. But many of them

I deſire thoſe that are overridgid and uncharitable in cenſuring others, not to extend theſe

them will not so much as confess before a few Ministers or Officers of the Church, that they have sinned, but will stand impenitently in it to the last. Let me intreat them with all the submissiveness and earnestness that I can, when one hath beat or slandred another, or in the like cases, if I would kneel to them, I cannot get many of them once (Hypocritically) to say, I am sorry, or I did amiss: And those that do say so, in a cold, Hypocritical, heartless manner, will joyne with it such bitter words, against the accuser or reprover, and shew such hatred to those that admonish them, that declareth their impenitency. If you have such extraordinary abilities, to melt and mollifie hardened sinners, more then we have, you are the more unexcusably unfaithfull

complaints to more then I extend them: nor to take it as an occasion for the unchurching of whole Parishes, or any one particular person, without sufficient evidence. For I must profess that I meet with hundreds in my Parish, that I can comfortably hold Communion with, that some men of stricter principles, or more censorious dispositions would reject: Yea, and I take abundance for truly goldy men, that are not noted for any eminency of Religion, perhaps their parties, or callings, or opportunites, being such as keep them much from the Knowledg of others.

faithful to God and man, that will not uſe them. And all are not ſo haypy as to have your conquering parts. For my part I can ſay in uprightneſs of heart, that I do what I can do, (abating thoſe neglects which are the conſequents of any frailty) and if I knew how to do more, I would, with ſtudy, preaching, conference, labour or eſtate; and yet with abundance I am not able to prevaile, ſo much as to make them capable of Diſcipline. So that I ſee plainly by unqueſtionable experience, that either we muſt have Churches without the Diſcipline of Chriſt, and be Rulers without Ruling it; or elſe we muſt utterly undo our people, body and Soul for ever, and plunge them into a deſperate ſtate, and make all our following labous in vaine to multitudes of them: Or elſe we muſt take another courſe, then to admit all our Pariſhes to Adult Church-membership, as was formerly done, without preparation, and fitneſs for ſuch a ſtate.

And yet in their blindneſs, Gentlemen, Miniſters, and all that plead for common Church-membership, pretend to be charitable to the Peoples Souls, when they are exerciſing this grievous cruelty. It is juſt as if in Mercy to the ſchoole-boyes, you ſhould ſet them, that cannot read *Engliſh*, in the higheſt

highest form, where they must make Orations in *Latine* and *Greek*, or else be whipt: would they thank you for such advancement. It is as if you should put an ignorant unexercised, cowardly Soldier, or one that is but learning to use his armes, into the front of the Battaile, for his honour: or as if you should prefer a Pupill to be a Tutour, or put a freshman in the Doctors chaire, or admit a new baptized Novice to be a Pastour of the Church, where the blood of the people shall be required at his hands; or as if to honour him, you should admit any common Marriner to the Pilots place, or any Apothecary to play the Physician to other mens ruine, and his owne shame. If you set such Children on horsback, while you pretend their good, you will break their necks. No man is safe out of his own ranck and place: If the Husbandman know that every sort of plants and graine, must have their proper soile and season, and the Gardner knoweth that several herbs and flowers, must be variously manured, or else they will not prosper; why should we be less wise in the Work of God? As Countrey Schooles are Seminaries to the Academies, so the state of Catechumens or Expectants is the Seminary to the Church; and the state of Infant Church-

membership, the Seminary to the ſtate of the Adult, into which they muſt be ſeaſonably and ſolemnly tranſplanted, when they are ripe and ready, and not before. Truly our merciſull haſtlings do but yoake untamed bullocks, that are fitter to ſtrive and tyre themſelves then to plow; and do but ſaddle ſuch wild, unbroken colts, as are liker to break their own and their riders necks, then to go the journy which they are deſigned for. In the ſtate of Expectants, theſe men may profit by Preparing Ordinances, and the ſeaſon may come, when they may fitly be tranſplanted: But if we put them *inter fideles* that are *infideles*, among Actual Believers, and Adult Church-members that are not ſuch, nor prepared for the ſtation, we bring them under a Diſcipline which will exaſperate them, and turn them to be malignant enemies, and undoe them for ever. The Diſpoſition of the matter, muſt go before the Reception of the forme: For undiſpoſed matter will not receive it. As the Operation followeth the Being, and the Diſpoſition, ſo we muſt employ every perſon and thing, in ſuch operations only, as their Being and Qualification is capable of, and ſuited to. A due placing of all according to their Qualifications, is the chiefeſt part of

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our Government. Misplace but one wheel in your watch, and try how it will go. If any person or thing be not good in his *Own place*, he will be much worse out of in, it the place of his Superiour. Fire is better in the chimny then in your bed, or upon your Table: A good Clerk may make but a sorry Counseller; and a good Subject may make but an ill Magistrate: And many a man becomes the seat of a Justice, that would not become the Princes Throne. If you would not undoe mens Souls by a Discipline, which they cannot bear; let them stay in the Seminary of Expectants, till they are ripe for it.

Object. *But how do the Churches of France, Holland, Geneva and Scotland, that have exercised Discipline upon all?*

Answ. 1. Must I be sent to another Nation to know that which I have made tryall of, and attained the certain knowledg of, at home? I was never in *France*, nor at *Geneva*, and therefore I know not what number of obstinate, impenitent, scandalous persons are there, nor how many that know who Jesus Christ is, nor what a Christian, or a Church is; but I have been in *England*, and I partly know what store of these are there, and what usage they will bear, and what not. 2. Either other Churches have such

materials as our Parishes, or not. If not, their cause is none of ours: If they have, then either they exercise Christs Discipline on them faithfully, and impartially or not: If not, then they are not to be imitated by us in their negligence, unfaithfullness, or partiality. If they do, and yet do not undo the people, they have not such a people as ours, or else they have other means to further their ends.

3. The truth is, as in *France* they are but a people gathered from among the Papists, whose Church doth drink up most of the scumme; so the other Churches: 1. Are too lamentably careless, partial, or defective, in executing their own Discipline: And if I should come to think it lawfull, to forbear the Execution of it upon nineteene, I should soone think it lawfull to forbear the twentieth: And then what should I think of Scripture, and the Canons of the universal Church. 2. By this neglect

Melanchthon *Epist.* (*Impress. Lugdun.* 1647.) *ad* Dominicum Schleupnerum, saith. 1. *Quia in tanta multitudine vix pauci sunt Christiani, & apti qui Sacramento fruantur, cavendum est ne vulgus invitetur ad prophanandum Corpus Domini.*

Lege Calvin. *Institut.* lib. 4. cap. 12. §. 1, 2. Zanch. *de Ecclesia.* vol. 3. fol. 123, 124, 134, 135. and others cited in the Preface of my *Reformed Pastor.*

neglect it is, that Reformed Churches have contracted the greateſt diſhonour that is upon them, while they are found in Doctrine, and have Learned Paſtours, able to confound the Romiſh adverſaries; but alas, too many unmeet Church-members. 3. They have (and *Scotland* had till lately) the Magiſtrates Sword to drive men on, and force them to ſubmit to Diſcipline, which is not our caſe, nor was the caſe of the Primitive Church. It is not there the Churches cenſure that doth the work, but the Magiſtrates Sword, no more then it was with our Biſhops in *England*. 4. And yet what work a little exerciſe of Diſcipline made, may appear in the caſe of *Calvin*, at *Geneva*, when for ſuſpending the Sacrament, when the people were in enmity, he was baniſhed *Geneva*, and their dogs called by the name of *Calvin*; and when the ſuſpending of one *Bertelerius* could put them all into ſuch a flame.

Object. *But fiat Juſtitia & ruat cœlum: let us truſt God with His owne Ordinances: We muſt do our duty, What ever come of it?*

Anſw. This doth but beg the Queſtion: Gods Ordinances are not for deſtruction, but edification; at leaſt as to the multitude of the ungodly, they tend to their Converſion,

sion, and not to their perdition. Is that likely to be Gods Ordinance, which certain experience telleth us, will put such multitudes of men into a hopeless case, or next to hopeless? Ministers are appointed to *make Disciples*, and gather men to Christ, and further their Conversion, and not plunge them into a remediless state, and to hurry them all unprepared into Church-communion, that they may be thrust out againe, and brought to hate the Church. It's another work to advance them to the Pinacle of the Temple, that he may cast them down headlong. And I yet never knew the man, nor saw his face, that practised what this Objection pleads for; and exercised Discipline faithfully on a whole Parish. Nor do I believe that any man can do it that would; unless the Magistrate do it for him. For he cannot do it without the peoples consent: and if he sentence such to be avoided by the people, they will despise his sentence, and hold communion with them the more, and do as our Drunkards do, when one of their Companions is put in the stocks, bring him Ale and good cheare, and eat, and drink, and make merry with him, if the Magistrate restraine them not.

Object. *But Excommunication must not be used,*

used, till all other remedies will do no good: and when all will do no good, what good will it do such to be kept under other means?

Answ. To do good, for the bringing a man out of that sinne, for which he is admonished, is one thing, and to do good, for his Information and Conversion in the maine, is another thing; It is the use of Discipline, to cure men of the particular sinnes that they are reproved for, rather then to convert them from a state of wickednes in generall. 2. Nor is Excommunication to be deferred, as long as there is any Hope by other meanes; but only till we have used other means in vaine, for such a season as is meet; that the ends of Discipline be not frustrate. For else there should never man be Excommunicated: For there is some Hope that preaching against his sinne may do him good at last; though he come drunk to the Lords Table twenty years together, you cannot say that his Conversion is Impossible: And yet we must not hereupon deferre the casting out of such a member. But in his *Expectant* state, or among the *Catechumens*, we may beare with him lawfully in his wickednes, without excluding him from among our hearers, and if he heare us seaven years and seaven in vaine, there is yet some

some Hope of his Conversion, while he waiteth in his own place and way.

And yet I yield this much to the Objectours freely, that when fit persons are taken into the Church, (yea or unfit, by negligence) we must wait with all patience that is consistent with the ends of Government, and cutting off must be the last remedie: and that when it is necessary, it must be used, though we see that it's ten to one, it will plunge the person (occasionally) into a worse condition. For the Publike Ends of Discipline, (the credit of Christianity, the preservation of the Church, and abundance more) are to be preferred before the good of that mans Soul: and as *pœna debetur Reipublicæ*, and we cut not off malefactours for their own good, so much as the Commonwealths, which by their hurt must be promoted, so is it as to the Church. But this must be done but upon a few, for example: and therefore but few that will need this severity, are supposed to be in our Communion. And I cannot believe that way to be of God, that would bring such multitudes into this miserable state.

Object. *Your very keeping them from the Communion of the Church, and not Approving or Confirming them, would*

as much exasperate them.

Answ. It's no such matter. Much it may, but not neare so much, as I certainly know by experience: Those not Admitted heare with Hope; but to the rejected I speak as almost hopeless, except such as were fit to live under Discipline, on whom it may have its due effect.

9. And by this admitting all men without tryal and Confirmation, to come unobservedly into the state of Adult-Christians, we breed and feed continual heartburnings against the Ministers of Christ; while we are necessitated to do our work upon such unprepared Souls. And how much the hatred and contempt of Ministers doth conduce to the destruction of the people, Satan is not ignorant, that is the diligent promoter of it.

10. By this means also we frustrate our own studies, and Ministerial Labours, to abundance of our people. Partly by deluding them actually, in the Reception of them among Christians, that really are no Christians, and partly by this provocation of their hatred.

11. By this means also we breed and feed abundance of Controversies in the Church: For when once we displace any parts of the frame, we shall find almost all in pieces, and one

one errour draweth on ſo many, that Controverſies grow numerous, and will never be reconciled by meere words and writings, till we actually ſet the Church in joynt againe.

12. By this courſe alſo we lay open the Ordinances of God, to a continual prophanation, while abundance that know not who Chriſt is, nor what Chriſtianity is, are admitted as Chriſtians, to our Chriſtian Communion: and ſo themſelves are involved in more ſinne, and Gods own Worſhip turned into Provocation; ſo that we may feare leſt God ſhould frown upon our Aſſemblies, and withdraw the tokens of his Preſence, and deny his bleſſing to thoſe prophaned Ordinances. Though the innocent may ſtill have their ſhare in the bleſſing, yet may the Paſtours and the guilty majority, deeply ſuffer by this great abuſe of holy things.

13. By this means alſo it is that ſo many Scruples are caſt in our way, about Adminiſtrations, and reception of Ordinances; and the comfort of Miniſters and people in them, is much abated.

14. And I doubt it is a hinderance to the Converſion of many ſects about us, and of many ungodly ones among us, who if they ſaw the primitive holineſs of

Churches

Churches might be drawn in.

15. And it much corrupteth the Communion of Saints, and turneth it to another thing; when this Holy Communion is so much of our duty and our comfort, and such a Representation of Heaven it self.

16. And if it be not a practical denial of some of the Articles of our Faith, it's well. We say there, that we Believe the Catholike Church to be Holy, and that it is a Communion of Saints, that is by the parts of it, to be exercised. And shall we deny this in our works, which in words we profess.

17. By this means also we dishonour the work of Reformation, when we hinder the fruits of it, that should be visible to the world; and make men believe that it lieth but in a change of bare opinions. They that see no great difference between the Reformed and the Romanists in their lives, will think it is no great matter, which side they are joyned to. It's noted by some Protestant Writers, that when *Luther* opposed Popery in *Germany*, abundance of the common licentious people, that were weary of Popish Confessions, and Penances, did joyne with those that were truly conscientious, and dishonoured the Reformation by their lives, though they increased the number, and did

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the ſervice as *Eraſmus* his Goſpeller, that uſed to carry a bottle of wine, and *Eraſmus* New Teſtament, with great braſs boſſes, and when he diſputed with a Papiſt, knocht him about the pate with the Bible, and ſo confuted him.

18. And by this means we give the Papiſts more roome then they ſhould have, to reproach our Churches, and glory comparatively of the Holineſs of theirs. Though I know that their glory is exceeding unreaſonable, and that our Impurities are no more to theirs, then a few boiles to a Leproſie; yet we do ill to give them ſo much occaſion, as we do, who are ready to make the worſt of all.

19. By this means alſo we leave all Sects, to quarrel with us, and diſpute againſt us, even whether we be true Churches of Chriſt or not, becauſe our Adult-profeſſion and Covenant is no more expreſs, and diſcernable, then it is. And though we have enough to prove our ſelves a Church, yet do we leave them under their temptations, and our ſelves under the obloquy. And indeed we perverſly maintain our own diſhonour, while we think it a condition to be reſted in, if we can but prove our ſelves true Churches; when our Learned Divines do give as much to the

the Romanists themselves, though not as Papal, yet as Christian. A Leper is a true man, and yet his cure is a thing to be desired.

20. Lastly, By this means also we tempt many well meaning people among us, to a dangerour separation from us, and to fly from our Churches, as if they would fall on their heads; and we too much harden those that are already separated: and all beeause we will not yield to the healing of our own diseases, or will do little or nothing to procure it. I know these men have no just ground for their hard conclusions, and censures of us; but we have little reason to give them this occasion, and cast a stumbling-block in the way of so many precious Souls.

To what is here briefly thrust together, if the Reader will adde the twelve Reasons, in my Christian Concord, *pag.* 11, 12, 13, 14. and what's said in my book of Right to Sacraments, where these matters, or those that sustaine them, are handled more at large, I suppose he may easily be convinced, that the former Church-Governours, in *England*, have been lamentably negligent, and our Churches by their means are much disordered, and that the present Ministers should be more forward, and diligent,

and unanimous for the cure, and that the Magiſtrate, if he love the Church of Chriſt, and the Souls of men, ſhould ſpeedily afford his help, and all too little to remedy theſe great and many evils, which we have let in, by ſuffering ſuch a looſe, unobſerved tranſition from the ſtate of Infant Church-members, or from Apoſtacy, into the number of Adult-members, without Approved Profeſſion and Confirmation.

Prop. 20. *So many and great are the Benefits, that would follow the general practice of this duty, of Trying, Approving, and Confirming (or Abſolving) all thoſe that enter into the number of Adult Chriſtians, that it ſhould mightily provoke all Chriſtian Magiſtrates, Miniſters, and People, to joyne in a ſpeedy and vigorous execution of it.*

1. ONe excellent fruit of this Practice, will be the great increaſe of Knowledge, and godlineſs, and the deſtruction of ignorance, and notorious impiety. This is an effect, moſt apparent in the Cauſes. When men are made to underſtand, that by the Law of God, ſeconded by the common conſent

consent of the Church, and the most Learned, Godly Pastours, and (if it may be) by the Law of the Land; no man is to be accounted, or numbered with Adult Christians, but those that make a sober, serious, understanding Profession of Christianity, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the Devil, and not contradicting, and nullifying this Profession, by a wicked life; this will engage Parents, to teach their Children, and Children themselves to learn what Christianity is, when they cannot have the Name, or the honour, and the Priviledges of Christians, without some Credible Appearance of the thing. For doubtles while Christianity is in credit, the same motives that now prevaile with the multitude to seeme Christians, and to desire the Baptism of their Children, will continue then, to make them desire to be numbred with Christians, when they are at age: and so will provoke them to do that, without which they know they connot be esteemed Christians. And as it's now a common thing to be baptized in Infancy, so will it be then a common thing, for our young people to learn the Principles of Christianity, yea and to reform their lives, (I hope with the most) when they understand, that else they must be taken to be no

Chriſtians. And if it were but the making of the underſtanding Profeſſion, and outſide of Chriſtianity, to be commoner among us, it would be a moſt precious fruit of our endeavours. But much more, when true Chriſtianity it ſelfe, in the life and power of it, would alſo be more common. As no doubt but it would: For the Knowledg of the Letter, is the way to the receiving of the Spirit; & among multitudes that have the outſide of true Religion, there will be far more, that have the life and ſoule of it, then among thoſe that have not ſo much as the outſide. Any man in reaſon may foreſee, that if we be openly agreed, and it be publikely enacted, or declared, that none be taken into the number of Adult Chriſtians, nor admitted to their Privileges, till they have made an Approved Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and ſo be received by Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, acting by his Miniſters, it will ſet all that care for the Name, or hopes or Priviſidges of Chriſtians, to learn, and be, and do, that which they know will be ſo required of them. Whereas, as things go now in moſt places, they may bring their Children to Baptiſm, without underſtanding what Baptiſm is; and thoſe Children may ſlide into the ſtate of the Adult-Chriſtians, and poſſeſs the Name, and

place,

place, and outward Communion, and other honours and Priviledges of such, without knowing whether Christ were a man or a woman, or who he is, or what business he came about into the world: And when no outward Necessity is laid upon them by the Church, to know more, or to seem better, no wonder if so many Heathens do sit among Christians, and if the multitude looke not much after knowledg or Godlines.

2. And moreover it will be a very great helpe to their Consciences, in order to the convincing them of their sinne and misery, and of the insufficiency of that Condition which multitudes do now rest in; and so to waken them to look after a safer state, and to be what they must *seem to be*; if they will be taken to be Christians. It is a great help to the deceiving of the multitude of the ungodly, to be currantly esteemed Christians, when they are not: And self-love is such a blinding thing, that a little help will go farre with it, in the promoting of such deceits. Naturally men are very easily brought to think well of themselves, and hardly brought to confess their misery. Every man almost will easily confess himself a *sinner*, and a *very great sinner*, so you will but allow him to be a *Christian*, and a *pardoned sinner*. For

this is a common confession, and brings no very terrible Conclusion, and message to the Soul. But when a man must confess himself, *no true Christian*, but *unsanctified*, *unpardoned*, and a slave of Satan, this is as much as to confess himself in a state of damnation, in which if he die he is lost for ever, and men are hardly drawn to believe so terrible a Conclusion: when yet it is so necessary where it is true, that we can scarce imagine how a man can be saved without it. He that knoweth not himselfe to be out of his way, will hardly be perswaded to turne back: And he that knows not himself to be unpardoned, will hardly value or seek a pardon: And he that thinks he is sanctified, and a true Christian already, will seek to be made what he takes himself already to be. And how much Reputation doth, to help or hinder men, even in self-judging, is easily perceived. Now here is a *threefold Reputation*, of very great moment, to concurre, either for mens Deception, or Conversion. 1. The Reputation of Prince and Parliament, and so of Law-givers and Rulers of the Nation, who by their Laws do manifest, whom they esteem good Christians, and this the people very much look at. 2. The Reputation of all the Pastours of the Church, which is to

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be manifeſted in their Agreements, Confeſſions, or Declarations and Practices. 3. The common conſent of Chriſtian people, which is to be manifeſted by their actions, according to the Laws of Chriſt, and the Direction of their Guides. If Magiſtrates, Miniſters and people do concurre, to repute all the Infidels, and utterly Ignorant, wicked men among us to be Chriſtians, how many thouſand Souls may this deceive, and undo for ever? Whereas, If Magiſtrates, Miniſters, and People that feare God, would all agree accordng to the Laws of Chriſt, to eſteem none Adult-Chriſtians, but thoſe that by a *Credible Profeſſion of Chriſtianity*, do ſeem to be ſuch, it would abundantly help to convince them of their miſery, and the need of Chriſt and Grace, and the abſolute neceſſity of a change. We ſee even among good men, in the caſe of a particular ſinne, how much *common Reputaion*, doth help to hinder the work upon their Conſciences: Among the Reformed Churches beyond the Sea, what Conſcience is troubled for theſe actions, or omiſſions on the Lords Day, which in *England* would much trouble men of the ſame temper in other things. Among ſeveral Sects it troubleth them not, freely to revile the Servants of Chriſt that are againſt them,

because they finde it rather go for commendable, then much condemnable, by thosewhom they most esteem. Among the Papists, the believing in a Vice-Christ,and the worshiping of his Image and Cross, with Divine Worship, and also the consecrated Host, and the condemning all the Churches of Christ that do it not, do goe for Virtues, and Christian Practices, though they are most haynous, odious sinnes; and what is it but common Reputation of Princes and Priests, and multitudes of people, that could make so many, yea and such persons as some of them are, to continue in such sinnes, as if they were a part, yea an essential part of holiness, and one generation to succeed another in them. Were these sinnes but commonly *reputed* to be as odious as indeed they are, what a change would it make on millions of Souls? So that it's strange to see the power of Reputation.

3. Moreover, this course would be an excellent help to the Labours of the Ministers of Christ, for mens Salvation. They would better understand and apply our Sermons: whereas now, they lose the benefit by misapplying them. Now we must labour all our lives, (and with most, in vaine) to make unbelievers, and ungodly persons understand

derſtand what they are, and no means will ſerve to convince many people, that they are not truly Chriſtians, that know not what it is to be a Chriſtian, or that hate it and fight againſt it. When they all go together under the name of Chriſtians, what ever comforts they hear offered to Believers, they take them to themſelves, or miſtake them as offered to them; and all the threatnings that are uttered againſt unbelievers, they put by and think it is not they that they are ſpoken againſt. But if once we could but get men to ſtand in their own places, and to know themſelves; how eaſily then would our meſſage work? Me thinks the Devil ſhould not be able, to keep one man of an hundred in his power, if they knew themſelves to be in his power; nor one of an hundred, in a ſtate of ungodlineſs and condemnation if they knew that they are in ſuch a ſtate. At leaſt, I am ſure men will not ſo numerouſly, nor eaſily runne into Hell, when they know they are going into it, as when they are confident that they are good Chriſtians, and in the way to Heaven.

4. If this foredeſcribed Confirmation be practiſed, it will more powerfully oblige our people to Chriſt, then a ſecret ſliding into the number of Adult-Chriſtians will do.

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And doubtleſs ſolemn engagements and obligations, have ſome force upon Conſcience, to hold men to Chriſt, and reſtraine them from ſinne: or elſe Baptiſm it ſelf would be much fruſtrate; and the Jews ſhould not have been ſo often called by *Moſes*, *Joſhua*, *Aſa*, and other Princes, to renew their Covenant with God. But with us, men feel no ſuch bonds upon them. And many queſtion whether they are bound at all, by their Parents promiſes for them in Baptiſm.

5. The profiting of our people will be much greater in their own place; when thoſe that are not yet fit for Adult-memberſhip, and Priviledges, are kept in the place of Catechumens or Expectants. Every thing doth thrive and proſper beſt in its own place: If you teare them not out of the Churches wombe, till they are ready for the birth, they will proſper there, that elſe may periſh. Your Corne will beſt proſper in the cold earth, where it ſeems to be dead and buried, till the Springing time ſhall come. And you ſhould not violently unhoſe the eares, till Nature put them forth. The firſt digeſtion muſt be wrought, before the ſecond, and Nature muſt have time allowed it, and the ſtomack muſt not too haſtily let go the food, if you would have good ſanguifi-

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cation and nutrition follow. Men think they do a great kindness to grosly ignorant, or impious men, to take them into the Church before they are capable of such a station, and the work, or Priviledges thereto belonging: but alas, they do but hurry them to perdition, by thrusting them out of the state, where they might have thriven in preparation to a Church-state, into a state which will set them abundance of work, which they are utterly unfit for, and under the pretence of benefits and Priviledges, will occasion abundance of aggravations of their sinnes. A boy in his A, B, C. will learne better in his own place, among his fellows, then in a higher form, where he hath work set him, which he is uncapable of doing.

6. By this means also Church-Discipline will attain its Ends; It will awe and preserve the Church, and terrifie, and reduce offendours, and help them to Repentance, and preserve the order of the Church and Gospel; when it is exercised upon such as are capable of it; that know the nature of it, and either are habitually diposed to profit by it, or at least understand, what it was that they were engaged to, and understandingly consent to live under such a Discipline: and when it is exercised upon few, and we have not

not ſuch multitudes to ſweep out of the Church.

7. By this means, both Church-aſſociations, and Ordinances may attaine their Ends; and people will be capable of doing the duty of Chriſtians to one another, when others are capable of receiving it. Church-members are bound to *exhort one another daily, while it is called to day, leſt any be hardened by the deceitfullneſs of ſinne*, Heb. 3. 13. and to *teach and admoniſh one another*, Col. 3. 16. But before *ſwine, we muſt not caſt ſuch pearls, nor give that which is holy to dogs*, Matth. 7. 6. Therefore it neceſſarily followeth, that dogs and ſwine ſhould be *kept out* of the Church, and *caſt out* if they be crept in. Nothing hath more deſtroyed that *Charitable Community*, which ſhould be among the members of the Church, and that loving and relieving Chriſt in Church-members, then the crowding of ſuch into the place, as indeed are Satans members, and appeare not capable of that ſpecial Love, nor are capable of returning it to others.

8. This will make eaſy the Miniſters work, and free him from abundance of hatred, trouble, and diſadvantage, when like a workmans tooles in his ſhop, that all are in their place, and ſo at hand when he ſhould

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uſe them, ſo his Hearers are in order, and each one lookes but for his portion, and none are ſnatching at our fingers, for the Childrens bread, that belongs not to them, and men be not drawn to hate and raile at Miniſters, for not fullfiling their deſires.

9. By this means alſo, the Ordinances will be more purely adminiſtred, agreeably to their Nature, and the Inſtitution: And ſo God will bleſs them more to his Church, and own his people, with the fuller diſcoveries of his preſence, and take pleaſure in the Aſſemblies and ſervices of his Saints.

10. By this means alſo, the *Communion of the Saints*, (and the holy Ordinances of God) will be abundantly more *ſweet* to his Servants, when we have it in the appointed way, and it is not imbittered to us, by the pollutions of Infidels, and notorious ungodly men. Though yet I know, that in a negligent polluted Church, Gods Servants may have their ſhare of comfort, in his Ordinances, when they have done their own duty for Reformation, without ſucceſs.

11. By this means the Church, and the Chriſtian Religion will be more honorable in the eyes of the world, who judge by the members and profeſſours lives, before they can judge of the thing as in it ſelf: And as Chriſt

Christ will be thus honoured, and the mouths of adversaries of all sorts stopped, so it will do much to further their Conversion, when they have such a help to see the beauty of the Church and Christian Faith. Many more such benefits I would name, but that you may gather some of them, from what was said of the contrary incommodities: Only I adde

12. Lastly, it is a way that is admirably suited both to Reformation, and Reconciliation; to Unity, as well as Purity: which removeth many of the Impediments, that else would trouble us in the way. For as all wicked men will agree against it, as they will against any holy practice, so all parties considerable among us, do in their doctrine and professions owne it; and it will suit the Principles, or the Ends of all that fear God, either wholly or very farre. I shall here distinctly shew you, 1. That the Episcopal: 2. Presbyterians: 3. Independants: 4. Anabaptists: 5. Yea and I may put in, the Papists themselves, have no reason to be against this practice; but all of them have great reason to promote it, supposing them to be what they are.

1. That it is so far agreeable with the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, that our Episco-

Episcopal party have reason to be for it, appeareth: 1. By the *Rubricke*, for Confirmation, in the Common-Prayer Book, which saith as followeth, *The Curate of every Parish, or some other at his appointment, shall diligently upon Sundaies and Holydaies, halfe an houre before Evening-Prayer, openly in the Church, instruct and examine so many Children of his Parish, sent unto him, as the time will serve, and as he shall think convenient, in some part of this Catechism. And all Fathers, Mothers, Masters, and Dames, shall cause their Children, Servants, and Prentices (which have not learned their Catechism) come to the Church at the time appointed, and obediently to hear, and be ordered by the Curate, until such time as they have learned, all that is appointed here for them to learn. And whensoever the Bishop shall give knowledg, for Children to be brought before him, to any convenient place for their Confirmation, then shall the Curate of every Parish, either bring, or send in writing, the names of all those Children of his Parish, which can say the Articles of the Faith, the Lords Prayer, and the ten Commandements, and also how many of them can answer to the other Questions, contained in this*

The rest of the *Rubricke* see after.

this Catechism. And there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, till such time as he can say the Catechism, and be Confirmed.

So that you see we must not admit any, but the Confirmed to the Sacrament. And I suppose in common reason, they will extend this to the Aged, as well as unto Children, seing ignorance in them is more intollerable: And indeed the words themselves exclude the unconfirmed, and that cannot say the Catechism, from the Sacrament, of what age soever. 2. And I may take it for granted, that it is not bare saying the Catechism, that they expect, but also a Profession that they owne their Baptismal Covenant to God the Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghost: And also that it be a Profession somewhat understood; and not barely to say the words which they understand not, as a Parot doth. And this I prove to be their meaning, (yea and also that they live a Christian life) from the Prayer in Confirmation, adjoyned, which is this; *Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy Servants by Water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sinnes, strengthen*

The first part of the *Rubricke* anon cited, also proves this.

ſtrengthen them, We beſeech thee O Lord with the Holy Ghoſt the Comforter, and daily increaſe in them the manifold gifts of Grace, the Spirit of Wiſdom and Underſtanding, the Spirit of Counſell, and Ghoſtly ſtrength, the Spirit of Knowledg and true Godlineſs. So that here you ſee that the Church of *England* ſuppoſeth all thoſe that are to be Confirmed, to have already the Holy Ghoſt, and the Spirit of Wiſdom, Underſtanding, Counſell, Knowledg, and true Godlineſs: which they beg of God, as to an increaſe only for the Confirmed. And ſure they do not think that every notorious, ungodly man, hath the Spirit of true Godlineſs, if he can but ſay the Catechiſm; or that every ignorant perſon or Infidel hath the Spirit of Knowledg, Wiſdom, *&c.* as ſoon as he can ſpeak the words which he underſtands not. And in the following Prayer they ſay, *We have laid our hands on them, to certifie them (by this ſigne) of thy favour and gracious goodneſs towards them.* And ſure they will not think to *Certifie* men that know not what Chriſtianity is, or that live not Chriſtian lives, for this favour of God towards them, meerly becauſe they ſay the words which they do not underſtand. So that if they will but let men underſtand what they do, and make good

what is here expreſſed, we are agreed with them that ſtand for Common-Prayer, that ſuch as are unconfirmed be not admitted to the Holy Communion. And as for the perſon Confirming, I ſhall ſpeak to that anon.

De hoc diſſidium nullum futurum Sperem, &c. De tempore Confirmationis, Videò bonis viris utriuſque partis non diſplicere, ſi ejus uſus ad ætatem paulò adultiorem differatur, — ut parentibus, ſuſceptoribus, & Eccleſiarum prefectis occaſio detur, pueros de fide quam in Baptiſmo profeſſi ſunt, diligentius inſtituendi & admonendi. Georg. Caſſander, *in Conſult. de Confirmatione.*

2. I will next ſpeake of the Papiſts, becauſe in their words I ſhall have opportunity to recite ſome more of our Own, even thoſe of the Canons Convocat. *London, An.* 1603. *c.* 60. I will paſs by *Franſ. de S. Clara*, and ſuch Reconcilers, leſt you ſay, that is not the common Judgment of the Papiſts: And at this time it may ſuffice to inſtance in one, that moſt petulant, inſolent Jeſuite, *Hen. Fitz Simon*, in his *Britanomach. lib.* 3. *cap.* 4. *pag.* 289, 290, 291. Where he reciteth the words of our Canon, that *ſeing it was a ſolemn, ancient, laudable cuſtom in the Church of God, obſerved even from the daies of the Apoſtles, that all Biſhops laying hands on thoſe*

those that were Baptized in Infancy, and are instructed in the Catechism of the Christian Religion, should Pray over them, and bless them, which we commonly call Confirmation, —we will and ordaine that every Bishop, or his suffragane, do in their proper person, diligently observe this right and custom, in their ordinary visitation. To which saith the Jesuite, *What do I heare? —— All this is very Orthodox, very Catholike, if uttered in good sadnes* —— And citing the *Rubricke* beforementioned, he mentioneth the Conference at *Hampton Court*, *pag.* 10, 11, 32, 33. *That the Doctrine of Confirmation was part of the Apostles Catechism, rashly rejected by some Churches, but in Calvins judgment to be taken up againe, and is ungratefull to the Puritans only, because they may not themselves administer it.* And *pag.* 64. he would perswade us, that most certainly the Bishops borrowed this passage from the *Rhemists Test. Annot.* in *Heb.* 6. 2. against the Puritans. More he adds from *Resp. Oxon. ad Libel. supplic. Covell*, &c. and concludes, *All this the Formalistes* (as he constantly calls that party) *do freely grant us, then which the Catholikes themselves, as to the sound of the words, seem scarce able to thinke, or speak any thing more honourable of Confirmation.*

And that you may see how farre he accepts also of *Calvins* concession, he doth with ostentation cite the words of *Calvin, in Act. 2. and Instit.* lib. 4. cap. 19. §. 28. that *It's incredible that the Apostles should use Imposition of hands, but by Christs Commaud: and that it was not an empty signe, and that it is to be accounted for a Sacrament.* So that these two parties cannot be against us, in the matter of Confirmation, though I know that the Papists are against us, for laying by their ceremonies and abuse of it.

3. And as for the *Presbyterians*, they cannot be against it: For 1. The most eminent Divines of that Judgment, have written for it, of whom I could cite abundance: But *Calvin*, *Hyperius*, and others, cited by Mr. *Hanmer* already, sufficiently declare their desires, after the restoring of Confirmation: And *Chemnitius* a *Lutheran* is large for it, and others of that way. 2. And it is so clearly usefull and necessary to the Reforming of distempers in the Church, and the quiet of the Ministry, and the safe and succesfull exercise of Discipline, that I know they will heartily consent to it.

4 And for the Congregational party, 1. Some of them have declared their Judgments for it, in the approving or promoting Mr. *Han-*

Mr *Hanmer's* Book. 2. And I have ſpoke with ſome of the moſt eminent of that mind, that are for it. 3. And the ſolemn Covenant or Profeſſion, which they require of all that enter among them, as Church-members, doth ſhew that they are for it in the ſubſtance, though how far they like, or diſlike the ſigne of Impoſition of hands I know not. It is the want of this, that they are ſo much offended with in our Pariſh-Church, and therefore doubtleſs they will conſent.

5. And For *Anabaptiſts*, though we cannot expect their full conſent, becauſe they admit not Infants into the Viſible Church, and therefore Baptiſe thoſe whom we Confirme or Reſtore, yet doubtleſs they will like this as *next* to that which they ſuppoſe to be the right: and becauſe we come as neare to them as is fit and lawfull for us to do, it is the likelieſt way to abate their cenſures, and procure with them ſo much Peace, as in reaſon may be expected, with men that differ from us in the point of Infant-Baptiſm. Three ſorts of them, I ſuppoſe we may meet with: 1. Some that grant

Some few alſo there are, that are *Anti-pædobaptiſts* (againſt baptizing Infants) and yet not *Anabaptiſts* (as not judging it a Nullity, nor to be iterated) that

And theſe, one would think we might live at Peace with.

that Infants are Chriſts Diſciples, Chriſtian, and Viſible Church-members, but yet think that Baptiſm is not for their admiſſion, but only for the Adult. I confeſs I know of none ſo moderate, nor am I ſure there are any ſuch, but by hearſay, or conjecture: But if there be, our differences with theſe men would be moſt in the External ſigne. If they do but as much by Infants, as the expreſs words of the Goſpel do commend, and Chriſt chid his Diſciples for oppoſing, that is, if they yield that they ſhall be offered unto Chriſt, and that the Miniſter of Chriſt do in his Name, *Receive them, lay his hands on them, and bleſs them, becauſe of ſuch is the Kingdom of God*; and then baptize them, when at age they make a perſonal Profeſſion; and if we on the other ſide offer them to Chriſt, and the Miniſter in his Name accept them by Baptiſm, and at age confirm them, upon their perſonal Covenanting or Profeſſion, the difference here would be moſt, that they change the outward ſigne, and *they* uſe *Impoſition of hands* when *we* uſe *Baptiſm*, and *we* uſe *Baptiſm* when *they* uſe *Impſition*. And with ſuch it were eaſy for moderate men to hold brotherly Love and Peace. 2. Some we ſhall meet

meet with, that deny Infants to be Visible Church-members, and yet think the Infants of Believers, to have some promises more then the rest of the world, or at least that they are *Candidati Christianismi, Expectants of a Church-state*, and are as soone as they understand any thing, to be bred up as *Catechumens* in the Church seminaries, and to be Baptizd, as soone as they are actual Believers. And as far as I understand them, some of them will consent that they be offered and dedicated to God in Infancy, and solemnly received, by Ministerial Imposition of hands, into the state of Expectants. If these men be of peaceable, moderate Spirits, and agree with us in other matters of Religion (in the substance at least) they must needs acknowledg, that in the foredescribed practice of Confirmation, we come so neere them, that they cannot deny us brotherly Love and Peace. For I hope they will not think, that they may lawfully deny these (yea or their communion) to all that be not punctually of their opinion, against the Church-membership and Baptism of Infants. 3 And as for all the rest of the *Anabaptists*, that hold also the doctrine of Pelagianism, or Socinianism, or Libertinism, or Familism, or Quakers, or Heathenism, they are not in a capacity

for us, to treat with about Accomodation, or Chriſtian Peace.

But yet, as to all the intemperate, dividing, unpeaceable *Anabaptiſts*, that will but reproach us for our drawing ſo neer them, at leaſt we ſhall have this advantage againſt their reaſonings, that we ſhall be far better able to manifeſt the variety of them, then otherwiſe we could do. For whereas their common Argument againſt Infant Baptiſm is, that it defileth the Church, by letting in all the Children in the Nation, which muſt be caſt out againe, or the moſt will be openly vile; and that it defraudeth the Adult of the benefits of ſolemn Engagement to Chriſt; all this will be taken off by Confirmation, and will lie no more on us, then on themſelves, ſeeing by this means, we can as faithfully hold the Church door againſt the Adult, that are unfit to enter into the number, as they can.

And here I ſhall intreat the moderate, godly perſons among us, that are of the Epiſcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, or Eraſtian Judgment, yea and the firſt and ſecond ſort of Anabaptiſts, to conſider how neerly we are all Agreed, or how neer to an Agreement, when we are not aware of it, or live at ſuch a diſtance, as if we were not aware

aware of it: And whether it be not our duty to close upon this Practice, at least much nearer then we are? It is a sad and fearfull case, when men Professing Godliness, and all pretending to a Love of Unity, Peace and Holiness, shall hate or oppose each other, and separate from each other, upon a pretence that we differ in things that we are agreed in; and when such shall perswade the common Enemies, and the ignorant people, that we differ where we do not: as if the Enemy had not already matter enough of reproach against us, nor the ignorant matter enough of temptation and offence, but we must falsly give them more, by seeming to differ when there is no such thing. And if this be caused, by any mens hating their own Principles, when they see them in anothers hand, or yet by hating the *Practice* of their own Principles, I leave it to the consideration of sober men, whether such are liker to the Ministers of Christ, or Satan.

Give me leave here a little, by way of Application, to review what I said concerning our Accord.

1. How much many Brethren of the Episcopal Judgment, do censure other mens attempts, for Reforming their Congregations, is too open to be hid. But how little cause they

they have to be offended with any *Moderate* attempts, let their own forecited Principles be judge. I know that it is the *Adminiſtration* or *Government* of the Churches, that ſeems by the noiſe of Oppoſition among us, to be the greateſt point of differences: But as far as I can deſcern, it is not ſo. The *Conſtitution* of our Curches is the great difference: It's a ſhame to ſpeake it: we differ moſt where we are Agreed. I have ſo much experience of the minds of Godly Miniſters, and private men in *England*, that I dare boldly ſay, would we but all Agree in Practice, in the *conſtituting* our Churches of due *Materials*, where for ought I know, we are almoſt all Agreed in Principles, there were no Probability, that all the reſt of our diſagreements, would keep us at a quarter of the diſtance as we are. Truly the common, honeſt, godly people, ſtick not much on the difference in formalities, and extrinſick modes of Government: If they heare a Miniſter pray heartily, preach ſoundly, judiciouſly and powerfully, live holily and righteouſly, and charitably, and beate down ſinne, and ſet himſelf to promote true Piety, they are (commonly where I am acquainted) if not indifferent what form of Government he is for, yet at leaſt, can eaſily

ſily beare with him, though he differ from them. Let us have the Work of God well done, and we ſhall care the leſs who it is that doth it. The greateſt offence, that commonly is taken againſt *Epiſcopacy* is, 1. The former viciouſneſs, negligence and perſecution, that men of that way were guilty of; and 2. Becauſe men know that a *Dioceſan Biſhop* hath ſo much work upon his hands, that he will certainly leave the far greateſt part undone. So that the Queſtion is not ſo much *Who ſhall do the Work*, as *Whether it ſhall be done or not.*

But now if *this Principle* were Practiſed, in which we are Agreed, about *Confirmation*, or at leaſt, *a Publicke Profeſſion*, that ſo our Churches might be conſtituted of fit materials, and not be peſtered with ſo many Infidels, or perſons ſo Ignorant as that they know not Chriſt; or perſons ſo notoriouſly vicious, as that they are openly bruitiſh and prophane, and make a very ſcorne of Honeſty and Godlineſs, this would do much to heale all the reſt of our Diviſions. The Country knows, that the reaſon why the multitude of Ignorant, ungodly people are for Epiſcopacy, is principally becauſe they think that Government will do as it did, and rather curbe the Preciſians (as they call them)

them) then them, and will not trouble them with a *Differencing* diſcipline or adminiſtrations, nor urge them ſo hard to labour for Knowledg, and live a Godly life. Take away this conceit from them, by the faithfull practice of your own Principles, and they will hate you as much as others. What great ſatisfaction would you give to all that fear God among us, if you would Practiſe but that which the Rubricke of the Common-Prayer Book requireth of you, in this one point? For it requireth not only a *Learning of the Catechiſm*, but alſo *a publike owning of their Baptiſmal Covenant in the face of the Congregation, and a ſolemn Promiſe to live a holy, obedient life: and this at full age*; and after this they muſt be *Confirmed, before they be admitted to the Sacrament of the Euchariſt.* That it may appeare how fully we are Agreed in this point, I ſhall tranſcribe ſome more of the *Rubricke of Confirmation*, which is as followeth.

The Reaſons given, why none ſhall be Confirmed, till they can anſwer ſuch queſtions of the Catechiſm, as they ſhall be appoſed in, are theſe, 1. *Becauſe that when Children come to the years of diſcretion, and have learned what their Godfathers and Godmothers promiſed for them in Baptiſm, they may then themſelves*

themſelves with their own mouth, and with their own conſent, openly before the Curch ratifie and confirme the ſame; and alſo promiſe, that by the Grace of God they will evermore endeavour themſelves, faithfully to obſerve and keep ſuch things as they by their own mouth and confeſſion have aſſented unto. 2. *Foraſmuch as Confirmation is miniſtred to them that be baptiſed, that by impoſition of hands and prayer they may receive ſtrength and defence, againſt all temptations to ſinne, and the aſſaults of the World and the Devil, it is moſt meet to be admitted, when Children come to that age, that partly by the frailty of their own fleſh, partly by the aſſaults of the World and the Devil, they begin to be in danger, to fall into ſundry kinds of ſinne.* 3. *For that it is agreeable with the uſage of the Church in times paſt: whereby it was ordained, that Confirmation ſhould be miniſtred to them that were of perfect age, that they being inſtructed in Chriſts Religion, ſhould openly Profeſs their own Faith, and promiſe to be obedient to the Will of God.*

This, with what was before cited ſhews, that in this main Point we are agreed with the Brethren of the Epiſcopal Judgment, and therefore may expect their concurrence: and to that end, we deſire them to promote the Practice of their own Principles: and let us

not

not leave the Work of God undone, while we ſtrive who ſhall do it or rather who ſhall not do it. If the *Canons* allow the *Biſhops ſuffragane* to do it, you may beare with others of the ſame order to do it, rather then leave it undone.

2. And for the *Presbyterians*, I intreat them to Conſider, 1. Huw much the faithfull practiſe of this duty, will put by all the offence and miſtaking-reaſons of the Eraſtians, who ask them ſo earneſtly, *how they can prove that people muſt be examined by the Miniſter, in order to the Lords Supper, any more then in order to a day of thanksgiving?* I know it is an eaſy matter, to prove that a Paſtour may call his People to private, perſonal Inſtruction, at any fit ſeaſon; and therefore before a Sacrament when he ſees juſt cauſe: and they are bound to obey him, ordinarily, by virtue of the general precept, *Heb.* 13. 17. *Obey them that Rule over you*, &c. But if you make this the ſeaſon and uſe of your Examination, to admit men out of a ſtate either of Catechumens, or Infant-members, into the number of Adult-members, and never trouble them afterward with Examinations, unleſs upon ſome ſpecial occaſion, or in your ordinary courſe of perſonal Inſtruction, this would put by the oppoſition

position of gainlayers; and I think, satisfie all of them that have any sober considerations and love to the prosperity of the Church.

2. And consider also how much this way would facilitate your course of Discipline: you would be much more clearly satisfied, who are your Church members, and of your special charge, and on whom you are specially bound to exercise Discipline, and to whom you owe your special care and labour: and your people will be better satisfied then now they are, both of the quality, and regular reception of members, and who they be, to whom they owe the special Duty of members, and whom they are more specially bound to communicate their worldly goods in their necessity. How much uncertainty, confusion, dissatisfiedness and neglect of duty, remaineth in those Congregations, where this work is quite ommitted, is obvious to common observations.

3. And if any should have a jealousie of this designe, as seeming to set up the Congregational way of Covenanting, I intreat such to remember; 1 What an enemy to the Unity of the Church, and how unbeseeming a charitable Christian, a spirit of causeless jealousie is. 2. That it should be the more

gratefull

gratefull to you, because it is acceptable to your Brethren: If you are Lovers of Unity and Peace, you will be far from avoiding a Practice, because those hold it with whom you would be united, that is, because it tends to Unity; but rather you will be glad of such a healing means. 3. Consider that it is no more the Congregational mens Principle, then the Episcopal, Presbyterians and the Erastians. It is our common Principle, let us therefore make it our common Practice; an easy, a reasonable way of Agreement. The not Practising of this, hath cast us into confusions; and the Practise of it must be it, that must restore our Church Order, and heale most of our Divisions. I know it is agreeable to your Judgments. I move you not to forsake your Principles, but to Practice them. Do but enrol those only for your Adult Church-members, that are Confirmed, or Approve, upon a personal credible Profession, of true Christianity, and consent to live under your Ministerial Discipline; and it will do more, then you can easily now apprehend, for an Union with your Brethren, and for the closing of the sad, and long-continued divisions of the Churches.

3. And to the Congregational Brethren, I may

may boldly say, it is a Practice so suitable to your own Practice already, (though I think it is a more Regular performance of it that I propound, then most have used) that in reason we may expect your approbation and concurrence. Perhaps you'l feare that some of your Brethren may slubber over the work, and make but a Ceremony of it: But so may some of your Own mind, if they be personally remiss and negligent, as well as others. And perhaps others will feare left *you* should use it *over rigorously*, and make it a pretence for excluding many that are not to be excluded. But this will be according to the Prudence, and Charity of particular Pastours; and is nothing to those Principles, in which we are all agreed. Only I beseech you in the feare of God, take heed of giving just occasion of this offence. Be not Righteous overmuch: Remember how tender Christ is of his litle ones: and how he is displeased with those that keep them from him: and will not break the bruised Reed: If he carry the Lambs in his armes, and gently drive those that are with-young, it beseemes not *us* to turn them out of the fold, or to disowne them. We are commanded to *Receive him that is weak in the Faith, though not to doubtfull disputations*, Rom. 15. 1. It's a con-

junction of impiety, injustice and uncharitableness, to thrust back those that Christ would have admitted. It's *Impiety*, to rob Christ of his Church-members, and diminish his Visible Flock, and wrong those whom he values as his Jewels, and is tender of, as the apple of his eye. It is great *Injustice*, to defraud men of their *Due*, in so great a matter as his Church-priviledges and helps to Heaven. It's greater Injustice, then to turn them out of their houses and lands; for the Benefits are greater. It's *Uncharitableness*, to deale so cruelly with us, in matters of such Consequence. And it's the greater, 1. Because it is none of our own, but our Masters treasure which we deny them. 2. And because we are Conscious, if we are Christians indeed, of so much sinne and unworthyness our selves, as should provoke us to deale the more tenderly and compassionately with others. I would not have you blind under pretence of Charity, nor to let in known swine, for feare of keeping out the sheep: But remember that when the case is but so doubtfull and difficult, that you cannot know certainly the tares from the wheat, or cannot make a separation without a danger of pulling up the wheate with the tares, it's better let both alone till harvest. We will

not be wilfully guilty of mens Lying, or Hypocritical Profeſſions: but if they be guilty of them, we may yet believe, that God hath much ſervice for Hypocrites in his Church. And the number ſhall be ſome honour to him; and ſome encouragement to ſome that are yet without, to draw neerer us. Though it be the Intention of Chriſt in Inſtituting his Ordinances, and the Intention of the Church, that men be truly Penitent believers before they are Baptized (at age) or admitted into the number of Adult Church members, and to the Lords Table; and ſo never made the Euchariſt an Ordinance which is Primarily and Directly intended for Converſion of the unregenerate, and which known ungodly men may ſeeke, and be admitted to, in order to their Converſion: (*Bellarmin* himſelf confeſſing that ſuch come into the Church *prater intentionem Eccleſiæ*) Yet Chriſt that knew abundance of unſound Profeſſours would thruſt themſelves into the Church, hath provided thoſe Ordinances there, which conduce much to their regeneration: And even the *Lords Supper*, though inſtituted *primarily* for another uſe, may be a means of this, to thoſe that yet unworthily drew neer it. However, if we be commanded to invite, yea and compel men

to come in to the Church, that the house of Christ may be filled; we must not be too scrupulous in admitting them, nor to busy in keeping them back. If any where, it's here that Christ is like to say, *Odi servum nimis diligentem*. If men make a *Credible Profession*, I dare not refuse them: Nor dare I by my uncharitable Incredulity, take that for Incredible, which I cannot Prove to be so. His *Profession* is the Evidence of his Title with the Church. If I will deny him when he seeks admittance, I must disprove that Profession, and shew it to be invalid. Truly much experience hath taught me, that many that were never commonly noted for Godliness, and that through bashfulness, or want of expressions, or the hinderance of carnal friends, and worldly affaires, have lived as strangers to those that are eminent for the feare of God, have yet at last, disclosed themselves to me, to have been humble, serious Christians many years, as far as I was able to judge. Especially take heed how you slight or reject people for want of parts, or gifts, or utterance. I have known excellent Christians, that through bashfulness are not able to give an account of their knowledg of the very fundamentals of Religion, to a person whom they much Reverence, and are in awe

awe of. And I meet with many ignorant people, that in answer to many of my Questions do seem to be ignorant of Christ himself, who yet shew the contrary, when by other words, I have caused them better to understand me. If people be but desirous, and willing and diligent, it must be very gross Ignorance indeed, that must warrant us to refuse them. Many thousands are guilty of wrong intruding into the Church, when the Ministers and Church were not guilty of wrong admitting them, but had been culpable if they had refused them.

I speak all this to the Congregational Brethren rather then the rest, because they are most suspected to be overstrict in their admissions; and because I would intreate them, to avoid all just occasions of offence and disunion in their Practise, when we are all so happily agreed in our Principles, in this great point, of the Necessity of an Approved Profession.

4 And for the *Erastians*, as in the point of Discipline, they commonly contend with us upon a meer mistake, thinking we claime a proper *Imperium*, or *Magisterial Power*, when as we claime but the *Power of an Embassadour*, with such a kind of Power, as a *Physician* hath over his *Patients*, or as *Plato*

or *Zeno* had in their Schooles, (besides the Ministerial Power in Worshiping) so their Principal quarrel with us, will be removed by the Practice of Confirmation. You talk much of the Sacraments being converting Ordinances, and against examining men in order to the Lords Supper, and keeping men away. But are you not Agreed with us, that *a personal understanding, serious Profession of Christianity*, even of Faith, and Repentance (which conteineth a Renouncing the flesh, the world, and the Devil) is necessary to those that will (either by Baptism or Confirmation) be admitted into the Number of Adult-members of the Church? And do you not grant that the Adult, whether before Baptism or Confirmation, are to be tried and approved by the Pastours, before they Baptize them, or Confirm them? Grant us but this (and that the ancient Discipline should be exercised in the Church, which the Scriptures and all the Church Canons do record) and wee shall be agreed with you in a moment. For Baptism we are no stricter then the Common-Prayer Book, that required that the party (by himself or others) did *Promise and vow* 1. *To forsake the Devil and all his Works, the Pomps and vanities of the Wicked World, and all the sinful*

sinfull lusts of the flesh. 2. *To believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith.* 3. *To keep Gods holy will and Commandements, and walk in the same all the daies of his life.* That so, it may be truly said of the Baptized, that *he is made a member of Christ, a Child of God, and an inheritour, (or heir) of the Kingdom of Heaven:* and of the *Confirmed*, we expect but that which is here said to be given and assured in Baptism, *viz. A Death unto sinne, and a New birth unto Righteousnes; that being by Nature born in sinne, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the Children of Grace:* yea we expect but *what is required of persons to be baptized*; viz. *Repentance whereby they forsake sinne; and Faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the Promises of God made to them in that Sacrament.* All these are the words of the Catechism in the Common-Prayer Book. Yea we expect but that open Profession before the Congregation, which the forecited *Rubricke* of Confirmation requireth: no nor alway so much as that. So that I may well suppose, that no Godly, moderate man of the *Erastian* way, can dissent from us in this point of *Confirmation:* And a Consent in this, will be next to a Consent in all, between us and them.

5. And for the *Anabaptists* themselves,

though we expect not their *Consent*, yet we may well expect their *Moderation*, and *non-opposition*, and that as we thus draw as neer them, as possibly (in our present judgment) we can, so they would lay by all bitterness and reproach, and divisive carriage, and come as neer us as they can. And as now with the more moderate of them, our difference appeareth less then many of them imagined, so it may appear, that the distance in affection and Communion shall be no greater then there is cause. The *odium* of Division, and unpeaceableness, hath so long laine upon their party, that methinks they should be willing to have it taken off. And there is no way to take it off, but their visible amendment: by becoming Lovers and Promoters of Union, Communion, and Peace among the Churches of Christ. Men will never take your opinion to be of God, while general experience shall shew them, that it will not stand with that Love, Union, and Communion of the Saints, but engageth almost all that receive it, in Divisions, Opposition, and Reproach, of the Servants of Christ and his Churches. Though you think your own Opinion right, let it not so farre dispossess you of Charity, and Reason, as to uncharch all the Churches of Christ, that

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thinke otherwiſe, or to caſt off Communion with the Godly, that are not of your Opinion; as long as we come ſo near you, as to take none into the Number of Adult Church-members, but thoſe that are Confirmed, or Approved by Chriſts Miniſters, upon their perſonal, credible Profeſſion of Faith and Holineſs.

Lay all this together, and we may well conclude, that this Practice of Miniſterial Approbation, and Confirmation, (or Reſtoration) of all that are admitted into the Number of Adult-Chriſtians, or viſible Church-members, and to their Priviledges, is ſo neceſſary, and ſo admirably fitted, both for Reformation, and Reconciliation, of the Epiſcopal, Presbyterian, Independants, Eraſtian and moderate Anabaptiſts, and to ſtop the mouths of the Intemperate, and of the Papiſts, that all Magiſtrates, Miniſters and People, that love the Churches Purity and Peace, and long to ſee it cleanſed and healed, ſhould gladly embrace it, and vigorouſly promote it it.

I Have two things yet more to do upon this Subject. 1. To anſwer ſome Objections, and 2. To give ſome Directions to all ſorts, for the effectual putting it in execution. The Objections are theſe. Object. 1.

Object. 1. *You will tempt the Anabaptiſts to ſay, that this is but a ſhift of our own deviſing, inſtead of Baptiſm, leſt we ſhould yield to them, when we are convinced of the Neceſſity of a perſonal Covenanting by the Adult.*

Anſw. There is no Ordinance or Truth of God, that will not be ſpoken againſt by miſtaking men: and yet we muſt not therefore caſt them away. Nor is it the way to vindicate a Truth or Ordinance from reproach, to diſclame it, and ſo to reproach it actually our ſelves. Nor is it the way to get advantage of an adverſary, to fly fom him too far into the contrary extreame, but rather to come as neare him as the truth will give us leave. And to the Anabaptiſts Objection, we ſhall give them our reaſons againſt their way, in a fitter place, and have already done it. We are moſt certain that the Servants of God of old (both with Circumſion and without it, *Deut.* 29.) did enter their children into Covenant with God, as well as themſelves. And if it be the expreſs Word of God, that both Infants and Aged ſhould be entered and engaged to him in Covenant, we will obey his Word, and do both, though the Anabaptiſts will do but the one. He muſt have a hard face, that will deny that it was once the duty of Parents, to offer their children

children to God, and enter them into Covenant with him: and when they have proved that this Duty or Power is recalled, (which I never yet saw done, no not in Mr. *Tombes* his last Voluminous Review) then we will forbeare it; but till then it is not mens talk and confident words, that must make a tender Conscience yield, to omit so great and plain a duty, or give up so great a Mercy as this is. I am sure that Infants were then no more able to believe themselves, nor enter themselves in Covenant with God then now: and I am sure the Parents by Gods appointment, did it for them, offering and engageing them to God, and that God hereupon is called their God, and they his people: and that usually the signe of the Covenant was annexed. And I am sure that Parents have as much Natural Interest in their children now as then: And I never yet saw where God had acquit us of this duty, or withdrawn this Mercy from us, and our seed.

Object. 2. *The proof which you bring for this Confirmation is so obscure, that it is not like to be generally received.*

Answ. It was generally received in almost all the Churches on earth, till lately: And as far as I plead for it, it is yet Doctrinally at least owned and maintained, even by those Churches

Churches that practically have disused it. Of all the Christians on Earth, I suppose there is a thousand if not ten thousand for it, (doctrinally or dogmatically) for one that is against it, if we judge by the Laws, Confessions, and writings of their guides. Though the *Greeks* I know do not own the Popish Confirmation, nor have it not so formally as they should, and the Papists have corrupted it by their abuse; yet the thing in substance is owned dogmatically by almost all the Christian world: And they must be very singular persons that disowne it. 2. And I think the proofe that hath been given you is clearer, then you have for the Morality of the Lords day, for constant family Prayer, for Infant Baptism, and many a holy Duty, which yet we have sufficient proof for. What would you have plainer? Is there the least doubt of it, whether a Personal Profession and Covenanting with God, be necessary to him that will be taken into the Number of Adult Christians, and possess their Priviledges and Communion? Or whether this Profession must be approved by the Pastour, of the Church, and known to them that must hold Communion with him? Prove if you can, that ever one man was admitted among Adult-Christians, to enjoy Communion with them, without

without such a personal Profession. You cannot prove it. If Infant-Covenanting were enough for the Adult, then Infidels are Believers.

3. Object *But this will make Ministers to be Lords of the Church: When no man can be taken into the Church, or possess the Priviledges of a Christian, till he be Approved by them This will put a Tyrannical Power into their hands.*

Answ. 1. Such a Tyranical Power as every Physician hath, who may choose or refuse his patients; or every School-master hath that may choose or refuse his Schollars, if he engage not himself to the contrary, as *Plato*, *Zeno*, and every Philosopher did in his Schoole.

2. It is such a Tyranny as Christ hath unquestionably set up; and to accuse him of setting up Tyranny, is an unkind part of them that look to be saved by him.

3. It is a Power that hath Constantly been exercised by the Officers of Christ, and did not men smel out the Tyranny of it till now? What Prince did govern the Church doores, and judge who should be admitted, from the daies of Christ, till *Constantines* daies, when the Church was at the purest; yea or ever after for many a hundred yeares? Did not all

all the Apostles, and every Preacher of the Gospel Baptize those that they convetred, and judge of them whether they were Baptizable? And did not the Bishops Confirm the Baptized, without consulting another Power? Half that were admitted into the Church by Baptism, (and more) for some hundred yeares after Christ, were the Adult: and of these, the Pastour required a personal Covenant and Profession. The other half were their Infants: and for them they required the Parents Profession, and entering them into Covenant: But still the Pastours were the Judges, who were the administers.

4. If you think it too much *Power* for us, I beseech you think it too much *Work* for us: and dreame not that we have a *Work*, and not *Power* to do it, or discern what we do. Set others to do it, that you can better trust.

5. Who would you have trusted with this Power? Some body must have it. I have proved to you fully, that every man must not be the sole Judge of his own fitness for Baptism or Church Priviledges: and that the people or Magistrates are not the sole or chief Judges: and who should it be but they, to whom it is committed by Christ in their call to the office of the Ministry?

6. Mini-

6. Miniſters (as I before ſhewed) have no Tyrannical or Arbitrary Power. For Chriſt hath tied them by a Law, who to admit, and whom to reject. And if they diſobey this Law, the Magiſtrate may correct them: So that in the exerciſe of this Tyrannical Power, every Miniſter is under the laſh of the Magiſtrates violence, (if he groſly offend) whereas none of the people are under any violence, or force from us to obey us; but if all of them diſobey us and rebel, it is their own loſs, and we have no remedy. This is the Tyranny.

7. Laſtly, If you think it (as it is) ſo great a Power, for us to judge of mens Profeſſion and fitneſs for Church Priviledges, let it awaken you the more, to get the wiſeſt, ableſt men you can for the Miniſtry, that are fit for ſo a great truſt. If the beſt that are to be got, are not in the Office, beſhrew our Governours, and the chooſers. And if you do not caſt us all out, if you can put fitter men into the place, that are meeter for the truſt, beſhrew you for your negligence: we give you no thanks for it. But if you have *no fitter* for this work and truſt, will you caſt it upon *unfitter* or on none? It is a great truſt for a Phyſician to be truſted with your lives, and a School-maſter and Tutour with your

your Children? But what of that? Will you therefore trust the good women, or common neighbours about you with them; yea or the Magistrate himself. Or will you have no Tutours or Physicians? Or rather will you not be the more careful to keep out Empiricks and unworthy persons, and get the ablest and faithfulest that you can. O unthankfull men, that grudge us the Power of labouring and spending our selves for their Salvation, and judging, where we must act!

4. Object. *Is it not the use of the Lords Supper to Confirm us; and do not men there renew their Covenant and Profession? What need is there then of any more?*

Answ. 1. You would think much, if at the Lords Supper we should openly call each man to a personal, explicite Profession of his Faith, and Covenanting with God: And indeed it would be a tedious, as well as unseasonable work. It is but a general or joynt Profession of all together, that is there renewed: and notwithstanding that, there may for ought we know, be many a one there that is an Infidel, and knoweth not what Christianity is. 2. The Lords Supper is the food of the Soul, confirming by way of nutrition and augmentation; and therefore you must shew that you are alive, before you may

may partake of it. It is a feasting upon Christ, and with him in his family, and at his Table: It is a work of Communion with Christ and with his Saints: It is one of the highest priviledges of the Church: And therefore you must produce your title, before you can lay claim to it. If a man must be admitted to the Lords Supper, without any precedent, personal Profession or Covenanting with God, upon supposition, that by the act of Receiving he doth all this; then men that know not whether there be a Christ, or what he is, may be admitted: For multitudes of such there are, that in Infancy were baptized: And I know not by seeing him receive, whether he know or believe any thing of Christianity. If a man converted at Age from Heathenism, may not be admitted to the Lords Table without a personal profession in Baptism, then neither may such as are baptized in Infancy, be admitted without a personal Profession, in Confirmation, or such as is without any other Baptism. Our Parents Profession will not serve our turn, in stead of our own when we come to age. And therefore this Objection is vaine, unless Infidels may be admitted to Communion, and all be common. But I need not speak much of this, because I shall

have few such Objectours to deale with: Even the Papists themselves are many of them against promiscuous communion, though the Jesuites of late, have fitted almost all their work, to their man-pleasing designe: See *Joh. Thanleri flores.* cap. 23, & 24 pag. 257, *&c.* (An old Puritane, among the Papists) And they make confession also prerequisite.

Object. 5. *According to our arguing, Confirmation is not necessary to those that were Baptized at full Age; and therefore it is not necessary to any, if not to all.*

Answ. I have given some Reasons why it should be used, with all that have opportunity after Baptism; but I have proved it more Necessary to those that were baptized in Infancy. And if it were Necessary to no other, it would not follow, that it is not Necessary at all, because not to all.

6. Object. *Is it not better take up with an Implicit Profession and Covenanting, than make so great a trouble to our selves, and disturbance among the people, as this will make?*

Answ. 1. Me thinks, not only the face of the Roman Church, but of our own, might by this time have afforded us satisfying experience, what Implicit Faith, and Im-

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plicit Professions are, and to what they tend. Peruse the forementioned Evils of this course, and look upon the state of our people, where you may see them in existence, and then judge whether this Objection be answered.

2. An Implicit Profession, is the lowest and least, that in any case of extremity or necessity can be thought tolerable, and accepted by God, and consistent with the life and being of a Church. And shall we *deliberately* choose to offer God the *worst*, the *least*, the *lowest* that's possible to find acceptance? Nay he will have the *best*, as he deserves the *best*, or he will not accept it, when we have it to give: Shall we think that in a case of freedom, the same will be accepted, which Necessity only can excuse? Or shall we be content that our Churches have as many diseases as will consist with life and being?

3. An *Implicit Profession* makes or proves men but *Implicitely Christians*. Such dumbe uncertaine signes, do leave us in So great uncertainty of the thing signified, that it seems but a very mocking of God (that will not be mocked) when we have opportunity for an open Intelligible Profession, and will not use it, or require it.

4. It is *against Nature* for a man that hath Tongue in his head, to refuse to utter his

mind any other wise then by dumb shews, and yet expect to be understood and accepted. What is the Tongue made for but to express the mind? Indeed if a man be dumb, and can neither speak not write, it is more tollerable to take an uncertaine signe from such a man; then from another that hath the use of Tongue or pen.

5. It is a very *Implicite denying* of Christ, which many call an *Implicite Profession*. If a man that hath a Tongue in his mouth, shall refuse to Profes the Christian Faith and quarrel with the Minister that calls him to it, and say, we shall have no other Profession from him then to come to Church, and put the bread and wine into his mouth, and not to deny Christ expresly, I leave it to any reasonable man, whether there be not so much of an Implicite *denying* Christ in this *refusing to confess* him, when they are called to it by their Pastours, whom God hath commanded them to obey, and that in a case and season, when all the Church hath required it, or taught it to be due.

6. It is contrary to the honour of Christ, and the very Nature of Christianity, for men to take up with Implicite, uncertaine Professions, when we have opportunity of more open free Professions. He is not a Mi-

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ster to be ashamed of. And he will have no servants that will not confess him before men, even in the hazzard of life; much more in daies of the freedom of the Gospel: As *with the heart men must believe to Righteousness, so with the mouth Confession is made unto Salvation*, Rom. 10. 10. What reason have we to whisper or draw back, in a cause of such a nature and weight as this.

7. Shall we thus teach our people to esteem Christianity, as an unobservable thing, by no more observing it? The *Solemnity* of mens *Transition* into the Adult-state of actual Believers, doth make it more *Observable* in the eyes of men; and they will see that there is more in it, then commonly is now esteemed. I find by experience that our people hate no preaching more, then *Differencing* Preaching, which leaves or shuts them out from the number of the Sanctified, and sets them as one the left-hand, in the face of the Congregation, and judgeth them before the time: but faine they would have Ministry confound and jumble all together: And then you may make them as great sinners as you will, so you will make them no worse then the Justified, that are forgiven, and shall be saved. And so in *Practice*, they love no differencing waies:

But shall we so far gratifie the Devil and the flesh? No: we must labour to make the difference between Christs Servants and the world, as conspicuous as we can! that the Consciences of poor sinners, may rather be wakened, then cheated by us: And therefore we should choose the most solemn Transition, and Record the names of the Confirmed, and let the people be brought to a publike Observation, of the Necessity of Faith and Holiness, while the Covenant and Profession of it is made so Necessary.

8. That is the best means, that is fittest to attain the End; The End of a Covenant is to *Oblige*, and the End of a Profession to declare the mind: And I pray you which is fittest for these Ends: An *Express Profession and Covenant*, or a dumbe uncertain signe, by coming to Church; paying Tithes? *&c.*

9. Such dumb Professions are less tolerable now, because we have many in our Assemblies that we *know* to be no Christians. I know of many that will heare, that believe no life to come, and secretly make a scorne of Christ and Scripture, and many more that know not what Christianity is, as is aforesaid. Now shall we take up with such signes of Christianity, as we see and know are commonly used by Infidels, when

when we may have better?

10. It is *essential* to a Profession to be in some measure *explicit*: for *Profiteri* is but *palam vel publicè fateri*; It is no Profession if it be not, or pretend not to be, an *Expression* of the mind: And therefore to be *Implicite* and not *Expres*, is so far to be against the very Nature of the Profession; in that measure as your *Profession* is *Implicite* (as it's called) and not *Expres*, in that measure it is no *Profession* at all.

Object. 7. *But when you have the most expres Covenant or Profession, you are not sure that it is true, and that the man is a believer at the heart.*

Answ. 1. I am sure that it's *Truly a Profession*, that is, a *Pretended signe of the mind*, though I am not sure that it's *True Profession*, that is, a *True infallible signe of the mind*: I can know the metaphysical, though not the Morall Truth of it. And then I can be sure that I do my duty, and take up according to the Directions of Christ. It is his work to judge the heart immediatly, as being his prerogative to know it: but it's my work to judge of the Credibility of the Profession. 2. And what if I have no *infallible* Certainty? Must I therefore throw up all, and make the Pastoral Church-government

to be void, and cast open the Vineyard of Christ to the wilderness, and not so much as require a *Credibility*, because we cannot have an Infallibility? This may not be.

Object. 8. *But this will encourage the Anabaptists and Congregational, in their Express Covenantings, by our coming so neer them?*

Answ. 1. I may better say, you will make men Anabaptists, and drive them too far, by your looseness, and willfully shunning plaine duty. How can weake professours be drawn to think well of that party, which they see do shun so needfull a Work of God? 2. Love and Peace will teach all Christians to say, that it's the best for Unity and healing of our breaches, to come as neare dissenting Brethren as we may, and not to fly the further from them. At least we may not run from truth and duty, that we may be unlike our dissenting Brethren. 3. And I take it to be my duty to tell this alowd to the Christian world, that after long conteſt with the Anabaptists, and opposition of their waies, I am grown (as I confidently think) to this discovery of the mind of God in suffering them among us; that he had this great truth and duty, to which he saw it necessary to awake us; the Church having been so lamentably defiled, Discipline made an impossible thing

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and mens Salvation grievously hindred, by the common *secret*, *unobserved transition* of all people into the name, and number, and Priviledges of Adult-Christians; therefore did God permit these men, to step too far on the other side, that the noise might be the greater, and his call the more observable; so that they are his messengers, calling aloud to *England*, and all other Christian Churches in *Europe*, to keep the doore, and repaire the hedge, and no more to take an Infant-baptism, and Profession of our Parents, as a sufficient Evidence of the Title of the Adult, to the Name, or Place, or Priveledges of Christians; but to give them Infant Priviledges upon the Parents Profession; but to require of them a sober, serious Profession and Covenanting by themselves, in owning their Baptismal Covenant, before we number them with Adult-Christians: And that God hath suffered the Anabaptists to make such a stirre among us, will prove a mercy to us in the End, if we have the wit and grace to learn this, upon this troublesome occasion; and then the Reformation will do us more good, then ever the Anabaptists did us harm. But if we will not learne, nor obey Gods call, we must yet looke to be molested by them more, or

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else to do and suffer worse.

Object. 9. *But if you will not take a non-renouncing of Christ, and Infant Baptism as sufficient, without a Personal Covenant and Profession, you may on the same grounds call men every Week to such a Profession, because that the former Profession shews not what they afterwards are, but what then they are.*

Answ. 1. The case is quite another: In your instance, it is but the *continuance of the same Profession and Condition* that is requisite: And I am bound to take it as continued, while I have no Evidence to question it, and see the performance of it, as far as belongeth to my cognisance. But in my case the *Conditions* and the *Professions* are not the same: *A new Condition* of *Right*, is necessary to the *Adult*, which they had not at all in their Infant Baptism. *Then* they entered upon their *Parents* Faith or Profession; but at age they must necessarily have a Faith, or Profession of their *own*, or else they actually cease to be Christians.

2. And yet let me adde, that frequent Professions of Faith, and renewing Covenant with God, have ever been used in the Church; both before Christs Incarnation and since, and indeed, the Lords Supper doth import it: And for my part, I think it

it a very convenient, edifying course, to have the *Articles of our Faith every day repeated, as the Belief of that Church, and the people to stand up at it, to signifie their consent*; so be it, you will not take up with this silent Profession alone, and exclude a more explicite one, when it is requisite. But this fitly signifieth our standing to the first.

Object. 10. *But this will cast you upon the same difficulties which you Object to the Anabaptists; you will not know at what Age to take men for Adult-Christians.*

Answ. 1. We shall not accept them for their Age, but for their *Profession*: And we can easily tell when they offer themselves to tryal and Profession, and desire the Communion of the Church: As the Ancient Churches could tell when their Catechumens were to be baptized.

2. And for the time when we must judge their Infant Church-state to cease, if they own not the Covenant personally, we cannot set a certaine yeare, nor is it necessary: but when their Infancy ceaseth, then their Infant-state ceaseth: That is, when they come to the full or competent use of Reason: But then observe, 1. That if they be called at such a time to profess their Faith, and own their Covenant, and refuse it, then we must judge

judge them refusers of Christianity unless the Reasons of the Refusal allows another judgment. 2. Or if they will fully neglect for a considerable space, to own their Baptismal Covenant, and to seeke a standing among the Adult-Christians, it's a strong presumption that they are Backsliders. 3. If they only *suspend* their personal Profession at age, we must only *suspend* our Judgment, till we have some light to discern the cause: and cannot be sure that there are Deserters or Apostates. 4. But we are sure that they are not to be numbred by the Church among Adult Christians, till they have produced the Evidence of their Title, which is no other then *A Credible Personal Profession.* So that it's easy to know when any such person is to be admitted, and publikely owned as an Actual Believer, though it be not so easy to discern of all, before that time, whether they are to be reckoned as *Desertours* or not. He that wilfully neglecteth to come among the Adult Christians, long after he hath the full use of Reason (which is not with all at the same age) is to be much suspected, at least: And commoly about 16, or 17, or 18, years of age, is the time when we have reason to expect that they should seek the Communion and Privilidges of the Adult: For

about

about that age, they have a competent use of Reason.

Object. 11. *But if you admit them into the Church in Infancy, say the Anabaptists, you will be obliged to excommunicate them all, that prove ungodly when they come to age, and not to let them silently pass out of the Church again.*

Answ. Excommunication is either an excluding them from all Relation of members to the Catholike Church, or from the actual Communion of the Church, or from both. The former we can do but Declaratively. In the latter we also adjoyne the charge of God, for the execution of the sentence. But those that were never personal Professours of Faith, nor admitted into the Communion of Adult-Christians, are not fit to be cast out of it: And this is the common use of Excommunication, to remove those, as unfit, from the Communion of the Adult, that once were in it, and forfeit that Communion: which cannot belong to them that never were in it. And for our *Declaring* them *Desertours* or *Apostates*, we may do it upon just occasion, but we are not bound to do it publikely by all that are guilty; this being not *the Excommunication*, that is so enjoyned in the Scriptures. Where do you find that the Church in Scripture-times or after, was wont

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to *Excommunicate Apoſtates?* And yet Apoſtates were formerly of the Church. It is thoſe that hang on, and pretend ſtill to be of the Church, and intrude into the Actual Communion of it, that we muſt caſt out, when they deſerve it.

Object. 12. *But if they ceaſe to be Chriſtians, you muſt Baptize them againe, if you will receive them.*

Anſw. No ſuch matter: The Anabaptiſts themſelves will not Rebaptize an Apoſtate, when he returneth to the Church. He is to be received by Confeſſion and Abſolution, and not by Baptiſm. If a Chriſtian turn Turk, and afterward Return, he is not to be Rebaptized.

Object. 13. *But by this means you will unchriſten the people, and then they will be exaſperated, and turn Heathens, or hearken to any ſeducers that will miſlead them.*

Anſw. 1. No: we will unchriſten no man: but do that honour to Chriſtianity, and that right to the Church and the Soules of men, as to make a difference between Chriſtians and Infidels, and that ſomewhat wider then the bare Names. He that is a Chriſtian ſhall be more encouraged by this courſe, and he that is not, cannot be unchriſtened by us. If men will not unchriſten them,

themselves, they need not fear left the just trying and approving of their Christianity should unchristen them. 2. How little honour it is to Christ and the Church, to have the number made up, by such as we would disallow; I have shewed you before, and also what a mischief that is to themselves, which some would give them as a benefit. 3. If Magistrates and Ministers do their duty, (yea or but Ministers alone) they will better be kept from Heathenism, or other evils in the state of *Expectants* and *Catechumens*, then in the state of Church-members, where Discipline will make them mad.

Object. 14. *But at least your designe lookes as if you would keep the Children of all such unchristened; and what work would that make?*

Answ. I medle not with that Question, but leave every man to his own Judgment. And if I did my self keep off such children, I think it would prove but very few. For 1. I would refuse none of the Parents that had *aliquid Christi*, that made but a *Credible Profession* of Christianity. 2. I am perswaded that this Practise would bring almost all the people to a tollerable Profession, when they know it is expected, and what lieth on it. 3. Upon experience now I find, that

both

both the Parents are ſeldom ſo bad as to be uncapable of offering their child to God, (in the Judgment of the Church) Nay commonly here the more one of the perſons is in ſcandalous ſinne, the more the other hates it: And they are ſeldom *both* groſly ignorant. And thoſe that were delayed on theſe terms, would receive no wrong by it. Gods way is the beſt. The Children of unbelievers muſt not be inchurched in waies of our deviſing, nor reſpected before the honour of Chriſt, and the common good of the Church of God. But of this I ſay againe, I interpoſe not my Judgment, but leave each man to his own.

Object. 15. *But though Confirmation be a duty, yet none but Biſhops have power to do it: and therefore it is not a lawfull thing for Preſbyters to attempt it.*

Anſw. 1. What mean you by Biſhops? It is a word that hath, by mens application, got ſo many ſignifications, that we may well expect that you give us the Definition of a Biſhop, before you make him the matter of your Diſpute. And yet I have read ſo many Bookes that Diſpute for Epiſcopacy, and ſo few that tels us what they mean

Leg. Grotii, *Epiſt.* 162. *ad* Bignon: *p.*397. Clem. Roman. againſt a lower Epiſcopacy, then ours.

mean by it; that I must needs say, that most of them lose their labour, with such as I. If by a Bishop you mean, such as our *English* Bishops were, or any fixed Pastour of many particular Churches, I deny that such were ever Instituted by Christ, much less have they the sole Power of such administrations.

2. Do you meane that it is by *Gods Law*, or the Laws *of men*, that Diocesan Bishops only may Confirm? If by Gods Laws, prove it, and we shall quickly yield. But that it's very unlikely you should do. If you say that only the Apostles had this Power, I Answer, 1. That then fixed Diocesan Bishops had none of it: For the Apostles were none such. 2. Then *Timothy*, *Titus*, *Epaphroditus*, &c. when they pretend to have been Bishops, had it not. 3. *Ananias* was no Apostle, that laid hands on *Paul*, that he might receive the Holy Ghost: of this more anon. But if you say, that this Power is

Petav. himself saith, *Dissert. Eccles.* lib 1. cap. 3. pag. 35. *Ignorare non potuit Hieronimus quibusdam in locis absente Episcopo Presbyteros idem illud Sacramentum Confirmationis dedisse: quod de Ægypto testatur commentarius*, &c. And *p.* 36. he saith, *Constat olim solos Episcopos ordinariò jure tam baptismum, quam pœnitentium reconciliatione administrasse.* So that they may then as well forbid Presbyters to Baptize.

given to the Biſhops meerly by the Laws of men; then either by the Laws of Magiſtrates, or of Biſhops. For the former, we know of none in force with us, to that purpoſe; and if they were, it is a work without their line, which Chriſt hath done before them, and not left to them, to deſcribe the Offices of his Church. And for Biſhops Canons, we know no Power that any Biſhops ever had, to make ſtanding Laws for the Univerſal Church; nor of any ſuch Laws that are obligatory to us: And the Opponents themſelves do violate the Canons of General Councils without ſcruple (as the 20th of 1. *Con. Nic.* and abundance more) and how can they oblige us more then them?

3. Presbyters have the Keys of the Kingdom: Therefore they may take in, and Confirm thereby.

4. Presbyters may by *Baptiſm*. take in members into the *Univerſal Church*, and judge of their fitneſs in order thereto: therefore much more may they *Confirm* them, and judge of their fitneſs in order thereto.

5. Its granted, that Presbyters may *Abſolve*, (which was ordinarily by *Impoſition of hands*) yea, ſaith Biſhop *Uſher*, the Deacons were ſometime allowed it: therefore Presbyters may *Confirm*: Or if you yielded

yielded but *Abſolution*, you would yield much of what we contend for, ſeeing ſo many violate their Baptiſmal Covenant, that Abſolution for Reſtoring of them will be as neceſſary as Confirmation.

6. *Hierome*, that makes Presbyters and Biſhops by Gods Law to be the ſame, doth yet according to the cuſtom of the Church ſay, that *What doth the Biſhop except Ordination, which the Presbyter doth not*: therefore he ſuppoſed that Presbyters might Confirm.

7. The ſame *Hierome* expreſly ſaith, that *Impoſition of hands was reſerved to the Biſhop, for the honour of Prieſthood, rather then by Divine Ordinatlon:* * Therefore it is but a humane inſtitution.

8. The Epiſcopal Divines, and other Writers of their ſide, do commonly maintaine the validity of Presbyters Ordination, *viz.* that in caſe of Neceſſity it is lawfull, and where there is no flat Neceſſity, it is not a nul-

* Hier. *cont.* Lucifer. *Ad honorem potius ſacerdotii, quam ad legis neceſſitatem. Alioqui ſi ad Epoſcopi tantum imprecationem Sp. Sanctus defluit, lugendi ſunt, qui in vinculis aut caſtellis aut in remotioribus locis, per presbyteros & Diaconos Baptizati, ante dormierunt, quam ab Epiſcopis inviſerentur.*

Clem. Alexand. *Pedagog.* 3. *Cui imponet Presbyter manum.*

Ambroſ. *in Eph.* 4. *Apud Ægyptum presbyteri conſignant, ſi præſens non ſit Epiſcopus.*

Grotius *Epiſt. cordeſ.* 154. *pag.* 382. *Si recte expendantur quæ ipſe* Aurelius, *de rebus nec vetitis, nec prohibitis diſſerit, non mirum ſi in iis alibi atque alio tempore alii fuerint mores; non erat cauſæ ſatis, curantis animis, tam odioſis illationibus iſta quæſtio tractaretur. Nam etiamſi aut baptizatus nunquam ungeretur, aut ungeretur tantum baptiſmi tempore, baptizante etiam presbytero. Adde etiamſi nulla ſubſequeretur manuum impoſitio, donis illis quæ per manuum impoſitionem conferebant Apoſtoli pridem reſſantibus, non ideo periret honor præſidentiæ piſcopalis, quæ tunc etiam in Eccleſia fuit cum Epiſ-*

lity where it is irregular. I cited (Chriſtian Concord, *pag.* 53, 54, *&c.*) many Biſhops and their defenders, that thus juſtifie the Proteſtant Churches, that have no Biſhops; as Dr. *Field*, Biſhop *Downame*, Biſhop *Jewel*, *Saravia*, Biſhop *Alley*, Biſhop *Pilkington*, Biſhop *Bridges*, Biſhop *Bilſon*, *Grotius*, Lord *Digby*, Mr. *Chiſenhal*, Biſhop *Davenant*, Biſhop *Prideaux*, *Nowel*, Biſhop *Andrews*, Mr. *Chillingworth*; to whom I adde (to make up twenty) 17. Biſhop *Bramhal*, of Schiſm. 18. And Dr. *Steward*, in his Anſwer to *Fountaines* Letter. 19. Dr. *Ferne*, 20. And Biſhop *Uſher*, in his Judgment lately publiſhed. Abundance more might eaſily be added: but Mr. *Maſon*'s Book in vindica-

cation

cation of the Ordination of the forraigne Reformed Churches, may serve instead of more.

9. We have no Bishop to do it: and therefore it must be done by Presbyters: Or we have none that we know of; and *non esse, & non apparere*, are to us all one.

copi & Presbyteri nomen indiscriminatim usurparetur, & cum præsidentia illa, non Electione, quæ Alexandriæ primum fieri cepit, Marco mortuo, sed participati consensus gradu deferretur.

10. Presbyters may Impose hands in Ordination, and ever did here in *England*: Therefore much more in Absolution and Confirmation.

11. King *Charles*, by the advice of his Doctours in the *Isle of Wight*, reserved *only Ordination*, and not Confirmation and Absolution to the Bishops.

12. Presbyters are *Governours* of the Churches, which are their Pastoral charge; and are called Rectors: (see Bishop *Ushers*, *Reduction of Episcopacy*, &c. proving it) Therefore they may do this, which is an act of Government or Guidance of the particular Church.

13. Presbyters must teach and oversee the people as their charge, and deliver them the Sacrament: Therefore they must judge to whom they must do it.

14. A Dioceſane Biſhop is uncapable of doing it faithfully: Could one man Try, Approve and Confirm faithfully, all the Souls in 200 or 300 Churches? It's known that here they did not: and it's plain they cannot. If they lay hands on them without Tryal, upon the Presbyters word, then 1. This yieldeth, all ſave the Ceremony, which we require. 2. And it is a venturing their practiſes on the judgment and fidelity of other men; who may ſend them Infidels to be Confirmed for ought they know. But if they Try themſelves, they are never able to do for ſo many, in ſeaſon: ſome will be old men, before the Biſhop will have leiſure to Confirm them; and many a hundred die without it. Nor do they know the people as their Paſtours do.

15. The Doctrine and Practiſe of the Church of *England*, under the Biſhops, is for the Power of Presbyters herein as far as we deſire: For 1. The Presbyters of Curates, had by the Rubrick, the Tryal and Approbation of thoſe, that were ſent to the Biſhop for Confirmation. 2. The Biſhops accordingly tooke them on *their words*, with a Certificate, and uſed not to try them themſelves, but only to Impoſe hands with Prayer and bleſſing. 3. And this by the Canon, their

their *ſuffragane* alſo might do; which yieldeth that a Presbyter may do it.

16. The Pope himſelf doth yield that Presbyters may do it. And *Gregories* Epiſt. to that end, is put into their Canon Law, *Diſt.* 95. 1. *part. Baptizatos etiam Chriſmate eos tangere conceditur*, and *Gregories Epiſt. to Januar. Calaritan.* is annexed: By which it appeareth that they took his former prohibition ſo ill, that he was faine to reverſe it. And though *c.* 11. he be forbidden *Infantes ſignare*, in the preſence of the Biſhop, without his command, yet ſo he was forbidden alſo to adminiſter the Euchariſt, yea and the Rural Presbyters, might not give the cup or bread, in preſence of the City Presbyters, *c.* 12. *ex Concil. Neocæſar.* 1. *c.* 13. But certainly this proveth neither the one nor the other, out of their Power.

17. The Papiſts commonly confeſs, that Presbyters may *ex diſpenſatione*, Confirm by Impoſition of hands: ſo *Bellarmine* himſelf. And the Shool-men ordinarily make it an act of the Presbyters Power.

18. If it be proper to Biſhops, then either becauſe of their *Order* or *Juriſdiction*: Not of *Order*: For they are of the ſame *Order* with Presbyters, as is frequently confeſſed by Biſhops and Papiſts themſelves, and

differ but in *degree*: Not of *Jurisdiction*: for it is no more an act of Jurisdiction to Confirm, then to Baptize or give the Eucharist.

19. Protestant Divines are commonly agreed, that Confirmation is not proper to Bishops, but may be used by Presbyters. For 1. *France*, *Belgia*, *Helvetia*, *Denmarke*, *Saxonie*, *Sweden*, the *Palatinate*, the Countries of the Duke of *Brandenburge*, of the Duke of *Brunswike*, the Land-grave of *Hassia*, with the rest of the Protestant Princes of *Germany*, and also *Hungarie*, *Transilvania*, the Protestants in *Poland*, &c. besides *Scotland*, and so many in *England*, are all without Bishops, having put them down: And though three or foure of these countries have superintendents, yet they make not Confirmation proper to them. 2. The English Bishops, ordinarily maintaine against the Papists, that Presbyters may Confirm, and therefore we have their concurrance, as in Dr. *Field*, Bishop *Downam*, *Mason*, and many others is apparent.

20. If all this will not satisfie you, for Peace sake, we will forbeare *Imposition of hands*, which you suppose to be the Bishops proragative; and we will be content

to

to do no more, then Presbyters alwaies did in Baptizing the Adult; even to judge and Approve of the Capacity of those whom they Baptized: and so will we only judge of the Profession and Capacity of those that we take charge of, and own as Adult Christians, and must administer the Lords Supper to: And this common reason cannot deny us.

Object. 16. *But if Presbyters may do it, yet so cannot you; For you are no Presbyters, & wanting Episcopal Ordination: or else schismatical, as having cast them off to whom you were sworn.*

Answ. 1. In my second sheet for the Ministry, and my Christian Concord, I have answered already: And for fuller answer, I referre you to the *London* Ministers Vindication, to Mr. *Mason's* Vindication of the Ordination of the Protestant Churches, *&c.* If Bishop *Bancroft* himself, as Dr. *Bernard* mentions, in Bishop *Usher's* Judgment, and the rest of the Prelates, were against the reordaining the Scots Ministers, me thinks, few should be so much more intemperate, then that intemperate Prelate, as to judge their Ordination Null. And if the Papists in the Canon Law, do judge that in some cases an excommunicate mans Ordination is valid, me thinks Protestants should not

not be worſe to the Church then they: Eſpecially thoſe that are for the Neceſſity of an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of juſtly ordained Paſtours; who muſt (I dare boldly ſay) derive their ſucceſſion from unmeeter, and more uncapable hands, then *Engliſh* Paſtours.

☞ 2. No more is neceſſary to the Authority and juſt ordination of a Paſtour, but that he enter according to the Laws of God; which Laws require us to ſubmit to the tryal, of our Rulers and Brethren, Magiſtrates (in ſome caſes) and Paſtours; and to come in according to the beſt means, for Election and Approbation, that are then to be had and uſed; but they bind us not to come in by waies Impoſſible, nor to ſee that our Anteceſſours through all generations have been lawfully ordained.

3. I have ſhewed already, and God willing ſhall more fully do it, in a Diſputation on that ſubject, that our Engliſh Epiſcopacy was not that which God eſtabliſhed, but intollerably inconſiſtent with it: And therefore neither are men the leſs Miniſters for being without their Ordinations, nor are they Schiſmaticks for conſenting to their depoſition.

4. As for breaking Oathes of Canonical Obedience

Obedience to them, I think but few among us did take any such oath, and therefore broke none.

5. Many among us were Ordained by Bishops, and some that were Ordained took not that oath: and others that did, yet obeyed them while they stood, and what could they do more.

6 The younger sort of Ministers had no hand in taking down the Bishops; and therefore are not schismatical thereby: And that their Ordination is no Nullity, Bshiop *Usher* and other twenty Prelatical witnesses forecited will testifie.

Object. 17. *But on the contrary side it will be said, that you would set up the Popish Sacrament of Confirmation again.*

Answ. The Papists have made another thing of it: They use it to Infants, and so will not we: They make a proper Sacrament of it: They make the visible signes to be Anointing and Crossing, in the name of the Father, Sonne and Holy Ghost; and they make Imposition of hands no part of it, but cast it off, (though in words they own it) They adjoyn a boxe of the eare, to signifie, the opposition that Christs Souldiers must expect: They make it to imprint I know not what

Vid. Chamier. l. 4. *de Sacra.* cap. 10, & 11.

what indelible Caracter, and to give grace *ex opere operato:* They make it to be an entering of us into Christs *militia* abusing Baptism, as being but an entering us into his *Family*, and not his warfare: All this is nothing to that, which I am pleading for, and which the protestant writers do wish for.

Object 18. *At least you will revive the Prelatical Confirmation againe, which the old non-conformists were against.*

Answ. We will revive nothing of it, but what was good: The corruption we shall omit. They did it but on a few, (contrary to their own Laws) but we would have it used to all. They Confirmed children that understood not what they said: But we shall expect an understanding Profession of Faith. They did it in a hurry as an idle Ceremony: we would have it done deliberately and with great reverence. The Bishop only did it with them, that knew not whom he did Confirm, but ventured on other mens words, or without: But we would have the Pastour do it, that knoweth the persons, and hath time to try them, having one Parish and not two hundred to oversee.

Object. *But, at least, the Papists and Prelats will be hardened or encouraged by your coming so neare them.*

Answ.

Answ. I will not cast off the Work of God, because that any will make it an occasion of sinne. And I take it to be the more my duty and not the less, because it tends to Peace with all. I take it not to be any part of my Religion, to study how to cross my brethren, or forbeare a practice (yea so necessary a duty) because they like it. I detest that principle and spirit. I rather feare, lest their own selfconceitednes, interest, prejudice and discontent, will make them dislike it.

Object. 19. *What have we to do with the signe, when the thing that occasioned the use of it is ceased? Imposition of hands was at first only for the gift of Miracles.*

Answ. 1. It was *much* for the gift of Miracles, but not only. And if the giving of one sort of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost be ceased; yet the other, more excellent and necessary gifts continue; and therefore no reason the signe should cease, because it was not appropriated to the gift of Miracles. But 2. If any man scruple either the signe of Imposing hands, or the Name of Confirmation, we desire him his liberty: these are not the things that we contend for: Let him but yield us that which I have shewed to be most Certaine, and most usefull to the Church;

Church; that is, *a ſolemn Tranſition out of an Infant Church-ſtate into an Adult, under Approbation of the Paſtours*, and the *juſt cogniſance of the Church*; and let him call it what he will, I ſhall not much contend with him about the name, or ſigne of Impoſition.

Object. 20. *Abundance of Miniſters are raw, imprudent young men, and not fit to manage ſo great a truſt: and ſo it will marre all; While ſome are ſo ſtrict, that they will refuſe all that ſeem not godly to their cenſorious minds; and ſome will be looſe man-pleaſers, and let in all, and turn it but to an unprofitable formality.*

Anſw. 1. While men are men, they will act as men. If we ſhall have no Church-Ordinances and Adminiſtrations, till you are ſecured from humane abuſe of them, you muſt ſhut up the Church doors, and give up all; and ſhut up your Bibles, till Papiſts and Infidels can find no matter of cavelling at the Tranſlation. 2. As I ſaid before, this indeed ſhould provoke the Magiſtrate to ſet a faithfull guard on the Church doores, that ſeeing the Paſtours have ſo great a Truſt, and the danger of abuſing it is ſo great, the worthieſt ſhould be choſen that can be had. And if it be not ſo, you reproach your ſelves, that are chooſers and Paſtours, and have the

Rule.

Rule. Why chooſe you not better if you know where to find them? 3. This Objection, is as much againſt our Judging of thoſe that are to be *Baptized*, which yet the Miniſters that did Baptize, have ever done, and were you not Baptized already, we muſt admit you, and judge who is to be admitted, as the ancient Preachers of the Goſpel did. 4. The Epiſcopal Brethren had more wit, then to be againſt Confirmation, becauſe one man may uſe it too ſtrictly, and another too looſely: The Congregational men are not againſt Church-Covenants or Profeſſions, becauſe one Paſtour or Church may be too ſtrict; and another too looſe in judging of mens Piety: The Presbyterians are not againſt Trying men before admiſſion to the Lords Supper, nor againſt Diſcipline, becauſe one Elderſhip may be too ſtrict, and another too looſe. The Anabaptiſts are not againſt Rebaptizing men at age, becauſe one Miniſter may refuſe the fit, and another may take in all that come. Why then ſhould a poſſibility of Miniſters miſcarriage, cauſe you to be more againſt this, then all the reſt? 5. If Miniſters be Aſſociated, they will be accountable for ſuch miſcariages; and the Adviſe and Admonition of their Brethren, may do much to prevent or reform ſuch

abuſes:

abuſes: And the faithfull people of their charge, will ſomewhat obſerve them, and *bid Archippus take heed to the Miniſtry that he hath received in the Lord, that he fulfill it*, Col. 4. 17. 6. As long as you are not forced into our charge, but have your Liberty to chooſe your Paſtour, (as now it is) you have the leſs reaſon for this complaint. If the Laws of *Zeno* or *Plato* be thought too ſtrict in their Schooles, as long as the Scholars may chooſe to come there, and all volunteers, they may the better beare it. 7. As I ſaid before, the truſt muſt be put in ſome or other to judge: And where can it be fitter then in them, who by ſtudy are prepared, and by office appointed by Chriſt hereunto. 8. If you will give a Presbytery, or one Eminent Miniſter in every market-Town, or viſiters of your own appointment, a ſpecial care to overſee the reſt in doing this, and ſuch like works, I ſhall be no gainſayer, ſo the work be but done: the more inſpection and circumſpection the better. 9. If one Miniſter refuſe the fit, there be many more that will not. 10 Your Commiſſioners may have power moderately to correct the Miniſters abuſes in their work.

But becauſe I perceive that Rulers are unreaſonably jealous, leſt the Paſtours of the Church

Church will do too much, rather then leſs they do too little, and are more ſolicitous to uſe the bridle of reſtraint, then the ſpurre of inſtigation: I intreate them to conſider theſe things:

1. That moſt certainly there is no part of all our Miniſtry, that ſtirs up neer ſo much ill will, paſſion, malice, yea and perſecutions againſt us, as this part, about taking in and caſting out, and exerciſing the Keyes of the Kingdom; in which you are ſo jealous of us.

2. And alas Miniſters are fleſh and Blood, as well as others: and all of them too tender of their Intereſt, of Profit, Reputation, and Eaſe: which are all contradicted notably by this work. Do you think Miniſters will be ſo hot on it, to have their neighbours hate them and revile them, and to live as Owles in the places where they live, and to put themſelves on a great deal of trouble? Surely it is a very ſelf-diſpleaſing thing to the very Nature of man, unleſs he be a monſter, to diſpleaſe his neighbours, and be hated and baited by them. And it will provoke them not only to forbeare all acts of kindneſs or bounty, but to deny them their due maintenance, as far as ever they can: And many, if not moſt Miniſters, have no great mind to be ſo uſed;

nay had rather loſe it, then go to Law for all their dues; the trouble, and coſt, and *odium* of it is ſo great. So that our Parliaments have been too much afraid, leſt Miniſters ſhould ceaſe to be men, or to be ſinners, and to be manpleaſers, and to indulge their fleſh; and leſt we ſhould runne into the fire, and lie down among the thorns, and chooſe a life of trouble and ſufferings.

3. And me thinks experience ſhould ſatiſfie men of this. Do you not ſee how backward Miniſters are to Church-Reformation, and Diſcipline in the exerciſe, when they have been moſt forward for the Power? How little is yet done in it, for all our liberty, after all our Prayers, and petitions, and writing for it? Do you find in moſt Pariſhes that Miniſters are prone to overdo? certainly you do not.

4. Do you not know that all the Work of God is ſo much againſt Nature, and hath ſuch abundance of enemies and difficulties in the way, that few men are like to be guilty of over-doing? Why be you not as careſull to hinder men from overdoing in ſanctifying the Lords day, in teaching and praying with their families, *&c.* but becauſe you ſee that few need your curb. I am confident, ſhould Parliaments do their *beſt* to drive on Miniſters

sters to such works as these, and make Laws upon Laws, to spur them to the practice, they would not be able to bring one half of us, nor the tenth man, to reach so farre, as Christ hath bound us; no nor one man of us, in all respects.

And yet I againe say, that if any rash men are over-rigid and abuse their trust (which is likest to be those whose maintenance no whit cometh from the people; for in the rest there is more danger of the contrary,) we desire not that they should be exempted from the Magistrates, Ministers, or peoples due means for their amendment. But let the spurre be most used, seeing there is most need; and let us see some severe Laws, to drive us on to those duties, that flesh and blood, and all the world is so much against.

I Come now to the last part of my taske, which is to give some brief Directions for the most effectual Practice of this excellent, needfull work. And I shall first speake of the Duty of Ministers in order to it, and 2. Of the peoples Duty, and lastly of the Magistrates. The Duty of the Pastours I judge to consist in these particulars.

Direct. 1. Let the Pastours in each Coun-

try meet together, and agree as one man in faithfulnes, and self-denial, to do their duty; that the most conscionable may not be liable to the reproach of singularity, because the rest betray them, and the Church and Cause of Christ, by withdrawing, and leaving the work undone: so long hath the Church already suffered the neglect, even of godly Ministers, that in such a time of leave and helpe, we still hold off, and dare not venture on a little displeasure of the people, when our Ancestours ventered on the flames; I grieve to think what a shame it will be to our names, and to the Reformed Churches, and what a confusion it may bring upon our faces, before our Righteous Judge. And it is a griefe to me, if I were sure of Magistrates assistance, that all our Enemies shall say, and that the Histories of this age shall tell posterity, that the Ministers of *England*, after fasting, prayers, warres and vowes pretended for Reformation, would yet do little or nothing toward it, but preach; even in times of Liberty and encouragement, till the Magistrate did it: And that it must be the work of the Magistrate, after our unworthy, lazy, or treacherous desertion of it. Had we no more help then we have, we might do much, were we willing and unanimous.

Direct. 2.

Direct. 2. Let us take heed of extending these Agreements to any unnecessary Circumstances, so as to lay the stress of the business on them, or to make that necessary, which is unnecessary: But let us Agree on the Generall certain points, and leave particular men to their Liberty, in modes and circumstances, not judging each other, if we differ herein: or if one be more or less strict then another in the execution.

Direct. 3. Let us yet all be very carefull, that in point of tryall and judging mens Profession, we avoid extreames: On one side let us not be Righteous overmuch, by keeping out any, that make the most broken, intelligible Profession of Faith and Repentance, and a Godly life, that may be taken for credible: and remember that we are not searchers of the heart, and that charity judgeth not evil of any, that are capable of a better Judgment. And certainly a humble Soul that's conscious of its own infirmities, and unworthiness will be very tender of condemning another, without very satisfying Evidence. Of this I referre you to my first Dispute, of Right to Sacraments.

On the other side, let us take heed of turning this duty into a meer formality, and making nothing of it, but mocking the

Church and God. Let us not take up with a Profeſſion of any other kind of Faith, but the true Chriſtian ſaving Faith; nor with any Profeſſion of this Faith, which we are able to prove to be Incredible.

Direct. 4. None of the Aged that have already been admitted to the Communion of the Church in the Lords Supper, may be brought under Confirmation by Impoſition of hands, as we have before ſhewed. But all that were yet never admitted to this ſpecial part of Communion, nor have made any ſolemne Approved Profeſſion, ſhould yet be called to it, be they young or ould, when they demand Church Communion.

If you ask me what ſhall be done with the reſt, ſeeing they were admitted irregularly, without any Profeſſion of the Faith? I Anſwer, 1. Acqnaint them plainly with the Nature of Chriſtianity, and what a Church is, and what is the Office of a Paſtour, and what the duty of the flock, to God, to him, and themſelves, and one another. 2. Then tell them, that you reſolve to proceed according to theſe Rules in the Government of your flock; and to exerciſe this Diſcipline. Tell them plainly (that they be not deceived) both what are the benefits of a Church-ſtate and Diſcipline, and what are the difficulties

culties that unprepared men are like to grudg at; and how hardly they will take it to be followed, and not ſuffered to reſt in ſinne, and openly reproved, and caſt out with ſhame, if they will not be Penitent and Reforme. And then tell them, that if there be any that have ſlipt into a Church-ſtate (in ſhew) and knew not what Chriſtianity was, or what they did, and finde themſelves as yet unfit for it, if they do forbeare the Priviledges of the Church, till they are better prepared, and acquainted with them, and can uſe them to their profit, you ſhall in meane time be ready to Teach them publikly and privatly, till they are prepared: And thoſe that are fit to continue, and uſe ſuch Priviledges, adviſe not to forbeare them. But let them know, that you can neither take all the Pariſh as ſuch for members of the Univerſal Church, or of your charge, and therefore muſt have ſome better Evidence, eſpecially after ſuch a confuſion, that negligence hath brough into the Church: And you cannot take any man to be of your charge againſt his will, and therefore you muſt know their minds. 3. Give them notice, that all that own their Church-membership, and will have Communion with that Church, under your Miniſtry and Pa-

storal oversight, are desired by you to signifie their desires, by giving in their names to the Cleark of the Parish, or some other fit person; or if they refuse that, by coming to you. 4. When you have their names, keep them some time, while you get information of the persons lives. And then give notice to all (if it may be, to avoid imputation of partiality; or at least of all that you have reason to suspect, of gross ignorance or impiety) by streets, Villages, or houses, to come to speak with you, on some appointed daies: where you may discerne the fitness of some; and such as you find to be grosly ignorant or scandalous, advise them to stay till they are prepared, offering them your help, because else you must do that in a way of Discipline, that they are unfit to beare. 5. All that disown their own standing and Church-membership, or present Right to Priviledges, and withdraw into the order of *Catechumens*, as being ignorant in what they did before, you may safely teach them as *Catechumens*, and are not bound to enrage them by Church-Discipline, which they consent not to, and are not capable of. 6. All those that you find tolerable, that have owned their Churchmembership, and not withdrawne themselves, you

you ought to keep their names, in a Church Book for memory, and to call them solemnly (at some day of humiliation, or other fit season) to own their Relation publikly, their names being read, that all may know with whom they are to hold Communion. And if there be need, you may justly require them there openly to renew their Profession and Covenant with God 7. Your flock being then Reformed and known, you need not call them againe, to examination before particular Sacraments, or other parts of Church-communion. 8. When any members are after added, they shou'd, if unconfirmed, and such as never did Communicate, be received solemnly by Prayer and Benediction; and if they be such as have been admitted to Communion, let them be only Approved upon renewing their Profession. For the one sort are Confirmed in their Relation to both Catholike and particular Church; but the other, only enter then into the particular Church, being solemnly received into the Catholick Church before, and perhaps into some other particular Church, or into that from which they departed.

Direct. 5. If any come in that hath violated his Baptismal Covenant, by a wicked life,

life, he is before you Receive him, to give ſome open teſtimony of his Repentance, (if his ſinne were open) that ſo he may be Miniſterially Abſolved, and the Church receive him, not meerly as an Adult-Believer, but as a Convert, with Praiers and Rejoicing. And the fuller Confeſſion he makes of his ungodly life, and of the way and Love of God in his recovery, and the fuller warning he giveth others of the ſinnes that he was guilty of, and the fuller he communicateth to them the Satisfying Reaſons that cauſed him to turne, the better it is, and more ſuitable to the ſtate of a Penitent: as alſo the fullyer he profeſſeth his Reſolution to ſtick cloſe to Chriſt, by the help of his Grace, for the time to come.

Direct. 6. For the excecution of this, becauſe all the People cannot be ſtill ready, nor attend, and becauſe, it's fit they have ſome cogniſance of theſe things; let ſome of the moſt ſober, judicious perſons, be choſen by the Church (not into Office, but as their Delegates, or Truſtees) to meet with the Paſtours monthly in ſome convenient place, where all perſons may firſt addreſs themſelves that ſeek the Priviledges of the Church (and where matters of Diſcipline may be firſt tranſacted, before we bring them to the Aſſembly

bly yet not forbidding any other of the Church to be there present, that will. And either in that meeting may members after be admitted, and their names made publike at the next Communion; or else some meetings publikly appointed, foure times a yeare, or more, for admitting such in publike, as shall be found fitest: which may be at a fast before a Sacrament. And let any of the Church (at that preparative meeting) have leave to put in what exceptions they have, against the person for his Profession or Conversation.

Direct. 7. Let the Pastours and Churches that live within the reach of any Communion, be as many as is possible, associate, and meet for the maintaining of Communion of Churches: (by their Officers, and Delegates) And those that differ in such tollerable matters, as may not hinder their Christian or Church Communion, and yet are not satisfied to joyne in Synods with the rest, let them Agree upon such terms of Communion and Christian correspondence as their Principles will admit. And let no stranger be admitted to our Church-communion, that bringeth not a Certificate (called of old *Communicatorie Letters*,) or some sufficient Testimony from one of these sorts (either

either the Churches neerly Aſſociated, or thoſe that we agree to take for Brethren. And thoſe that bring ſuch Certificates muſt be admitted by us, without any further Tryal, or Confirmation; unleſs there be ſome notable cauſe of ſuſpition. But for thoſe that live in Heretical, or Impious Societies, or ſuch as refuſe all Church order, and Communion with neighbour Churches, or are juſtly diſowned by the Aſſociated Churches, we ſhould not admit them to our Communion, without a particular Tryal, or a better Certificate then thoſe Churches can give them. And thus ſhould all the Churches be concatenated, and their Communion ſetled.

Direct. 8. Above all let every Miniſter ſee that he wiſely and diligently carry himſelf to the reſt of his Pariſh; avoiding indeed the excommunicate as Heathens: but for all that are willing to learne in an Expectant-ſtate, let us deale lovingly, gently and tenderly with them, denying them nothing that lawfully we can yield them, in matters of Buryal, Marrying, Praying, Preaching, or the like. And be ſure to carry on the Neceſſary duty of Catechizing, and perſonal Conference and Inſtruction with them, family by family, by which you may the better know

them

them and prepare them for Church-Communion, and have opportunity to quiet them, and answer their Objections; and they may see that you cast them not off as Heathens, but only prepare them for the state and Priviledges, which they are yet unfit for.

And especially let us by all possible condescension, meekness, loving carriage, blameless lives, and charitable contribution to the utmost of our abilities, endeavour to win them and take off that Offence, or at least abate it, or hinder the success of the reproaches of those, that will undoubtedly be offended, by our Reformation and Discipline. And let us have a vigilant eye upon any Seducers, especially Infidels and Papists that may creep in among them, to take advantage of their discontents; that we may prudently and effectually counterwork them. This much faithfully done by Ministers, might be an admirable mercy to the Church.

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2. THe *Peoples* duty in order to this Reformation before mentioned, is, 1. Of the godly, and such as are fit for Church-Communion: 2. Of the grosly ignorant and ungodly that are unfit.

1. The duty of the first sort lyeth in these Parti-

Particulars. 1. They muſt highly value the benefit of Paſtorall overſight and Church-Communion, and therefore be ready to promote any work of Reformation that is neceſſary, to their more fruitfull and comfortable enjoyment of them.

2. They muſt ſo behave themſelves as may honour and further the work, and take heed of that by which it may be hindered; leaſt they weaken our hands and be a ſtumbling block to others. For what can a Miniſter do himſelf, if the Church aſſiſt him not? much leſs if they hinder him? Eſpecially, 1. They muſt take heed of ſcandalous ſinnes, which may be a ſhame to their Profeſſion, and open the mouthes of the enemies of the Church. 2. They muſt take heed of Sects and Diviſions, and quarrellings among themſelves, which will break them in pieces, or hinder their Edification, and make them a ſtumbling block to the weak, and a laughing ſtock to the wicked. 3. They muſt take heed of ſurlyneſs and pride, and domineering carriage towards thoſe that are yet without: And muſt be as eminent in meekneſs, and humility, and patience, and forbearance, and ſelf-denyal, as they are in the Profeſſion of Religion. For a proud domineering ſpirit, or ſtrangeneſs and unneceſſary diſtance, doth loſe the ungodly,

godly, whom you ſhould be means to win. 4. They muſt ſtudy to do all the good they can to thoſe without; be as little as may be in executing penalties on them, and as much as may be poſſibly, in ſpeaking kindly and familiarly to them; and relieving them in wants, and viſiting them in ſickneſs, and think it not much to purchaſe their love, in order to their Salvation, with the loſs of your right, or with the price of much of your worldly goods. For all men love thoſe, or at leaſt will leſs diſlike them, that do no hurt to any, but do good to all, or as many as they can. To be the ſervants of all, is the higheſt Chriſtian dignity, and the way to winne them. 5. Take heed of falling out, or contending with any of them, or of giving them any harſh, provoking words, to their faces, or behind their backs. But put up any wrong that is meerly your own, and is in your power to forgive, for the ſake of Peace, and your own neighbours good. 6. Be not men of common ſpirits, or common ſpeech, or a common converſation: but as we muſt make a difference between you and others in our communion and Church-adminiſtrations, ſo let the reſt ſee that it is not without cauſe. For if you be but like

like other men, we shall seeme to be partial in making a difference, between you and other men. Let your Light therefore shine before men to the Glory of your Heavenly Father. Let them see that you despise the world, and live above it, and can easily part with it; that you can forgive and bear a wrong; that your heart is in Heaven, and your treasure there; and that you are the heires of another world: Let all men heare and see by you, that you have a higher designe in your eye, then the ungodly, and that you are driving on another trade, then the men that have their portion in this life. Heaven is your Reall Glory: and to be Heavenly is your true Reputative Glory, not only in the eies of the wise, but of the common earthworms of the world. 7. Set your selves in the most diligent and faithfull improvement of all your parts and Interests to help on the Work of God on mens Souls. Though you preach not, you have work enough in your own places to do, to further the Preachers work. Speake to poore people prudently, seasonably, and seriously about the state of their Souls, and Everlasting Life: and consult with the Ministers, how to deale with them: Tell them

them in what ſtate you find the people, and take their advice in further dealing with them. O if our neighbours would but helpe us in private, and do their parts, and not caſt all the burden on the Miniſter, there would much more be done then is! Nay, alas, to our grief and hindrance, ſome of our Profeſſing people are ſo hot, and ſelf-conceited, and proud, that unleſs we will outrunne our own underſtandings, and be ruled by them, and ſhut out abundance that the Word of God allows us not to ſhut out, and be Righteous overmuch, and ſhut up the Church of Chriſt, as in a nut-ſhell; they preſently murmure and rebell, and ſeparate, and muſt betake themſelvel to a ſtricter Congregation. And others of them, muſt have us caſt off Diſcipline, and cut up the hedge, and admit all to the Communion and Priviledges of the Church, and all under a blind pretenſe of Charity; and ſome Learned Gentlemen by words and writings, do enrage our ignorant and ungodly neighbours againſt us, and make them believe, that we do them ſome grievous wrong, becauſe we will not indeed deceive them and undo them, and ſet up new Church-orders (or diſorders) now in the end of the world, ſo contrary to all

the ancient Canons and Orders of the Church. I honour and deerly love the names of many of theſe ſtudious, pious Gentlemen: But ſeriouſly I muſt tell them, that they want humility, and in their good meanings do the Church a world of wrong. And though they may be more learned even in Theology, then we, yet it is a great matter to have or to want experience. They have not been ſo much in Church-adminiſtrations as we, nor had ſo much to do with ignorant Souls. And verily I muſt ſay againe, that the bare Theory maketh but a bungler in this work: I muſt much ſuſpect the Judgment of that man in matters of Church-government, or dealing with poor Souls, that wants experience. Let theſe Gentlemen, but turn Miniſters, (be it known to their faces, there's none of them too good for it, nor too great) and let them but try our life a little while, and I ſhall ſet more by their Judgments, then now I do. I red many a Phyſicians writings, before I was fit to attempt a Cure. It's a raw deceitful kind of knowledg in theſe practical affaires, that is not furthered by experience.

2. And as for the duty of the ignorant, ungodly people, I ſhall ſay little of it, becauſe I ſuppoſe they are not like to read or regard

regard what I say. Only in general, it is their first duty, to become truly godly persons, and so to live in communion with the Church. But upon supposition that they will not yet be such, their next choice should be to live in quiet submission to their Teachers, and patiently stay among the *Catechumens*, and *Expectants*, till they are fit for a higher place and Priviledges. And with the reasonableness of this motion, and how it conduceth to their good, we should labour to acquaint them, and make them sensible of it, that they may be patient in their station.

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3. OUr last work is to tell you, what is the Magistrates part, for the promoting of this work. And I shall urge them here to no great matters, because they shall not say, that we would either drive them in the darke upon questionable things, or put them upon that, which any reason can call persecution, or make them think, that we can do nothing but by their sword. And therefore whether they should force people to be Church-members, or Christians, or to come under Discipline, are Questions that at this time I shall not meddle with; But

Direct. 1. It is a great part of the Magistrates Duty to cause the people that are yet unfit for Church-communion, to keep in their visible station, and to behave themselves as Expectants, and submit to that Instruction of their Teachers, which is necessary to prepare them for the Priviledges of the Church: and to this End the Magistrate should by Laws and Proclamations, own this Ministerial Reformation. Alas how little knew they, what they did, that have so long been jealous of us, left we would do too much, and under pretence of Discipline enflame, or abuse them by severity? When as it is a work that casteth us on so much rage and hatred, of rich and poor, and calls for such abundance of Faith and Zeale, and diligence and self-denial, when we have so little, and are commonly like other men

In *Tertullians* daies, saith *Albaspinæus in Tert. de prescrip.* c. 41. p. 306. The *Catechumeni* being somewhat instructed at home, *cum cæteris tandem in Ecclesia primis concionibus, quæ in gratiam Catechumenorum habebantur, intererant; quibus peractis rursus omnes iidem ipsi Catechumeni ex templo discedere jubebantur, ne scilicet Divina mysteria rudium conscientia polluerentur* — So that it seemes they had then in the morning a Sermon fitted for the Catechumens, and all the after part of the worship was more Eucharistical fitted to the Communion of Saints.

men addicted too much to man-pleasing, and to save our selves, that if we had all the help that Magistrates can give us, it's ten to one but we should leve the most of this work undone. Preaching is a very cheap and easy work, in comparison of Church-Government. They have taken great pains to stop poor, lazy, short-winded men from runing up the steepest hill, and carrying the heavieſt burden, and passing through the greateſt sufferings, that in those prosperous times we can expect. And indeed I know it to be true, that for all the countenance of Authority, he that will faithfully execute the Pastoral Oversight and Discipline, shall live a persecuted life, which by meer Preaching he might avoid.

Therefore the chief Governours of the Nation ought to make Laws, and cause them to be executed, for the constraining of the grosly Ignorant and ungodly, to heare the Word preached publikly, and to submit to be privately Catechised, and Instructed by the Ministers: and to command them patiently to waite, as learners in this Condition, till they are fit to be Approved members of the Church. These carnal people look more at the sword, and will of the Magistrate, in matters of Religion, then others do; because

they underſtand no other argument, and can ſavour nothing but the things of the fleſh. Did but the Rulers of the Nation heare how they daily enquire what Religion ſhall be owned and ſetled by them, they would ſure think it their duty, to lend them a little more of their help. We deſire you not to drive them to Chriſtianity, nor to Sacraments, or Church-Communion: only drive them to heare, and learne, and be inſtructed, that the Light of Truth may do the reſt. Surely none can reaſonably ſuſpect, that this is againſt the Liberty of their Conſciences, unleſs the ſlavery of Satan be their Liberty: and it be their Liberty to be free from Chriſt, and Righteouſneſs, and Heaven. It's hard to believe that Governour to be a Chriſtian, that will not do this much to help his Subjects to be Chriſtians.

Direct. 2. And as the Magiſtrate ſhould conſtraine ſuch *People* to *ſubmit* to be Inſtructed, ſo ſhould he conſtraine the *Miniſters* to *Inſtruct* them, both by publike preaching, and by private conference and Catechizing, if they be able: and if through the greatneſs of the place, one Miniſter is not able to perform it, there ſhould be ſo many maintained proportionably, to the number and neceſſities of Souls, as may be able.

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The Reaſon why Miniſters themſelves ſhould be compelled by Penalties are, 1. Firſt becauſe ſome are ſo dull, that they need the ſpur. 2. Becauſe our performances will be the leſs reſiſted by the people, when they know we are forced by the Magiſtrate. 3. Becauſe the Magiſtrates Judgment puts much authority and honour on the work, in the peoples eies: compel us therefore, as well as them.

Direct. 3. The Magiſtrate ſhould alſo impoſe a penalty upon all that undertake to be Paſtours of a Church, and adminiſter the Lords Supper, and yet will not make any neceſſary Tryal of the Knowledg, Faith, and Lives of thoſe, to whom they do adminiſter it, nor exerciſe any Church Diſcipline on the ſcandalous; but utterly neglect that Overſight and Church-Government, which is as much a part of the Paſtoral work, as publike preaching is. They that will undertake to be Paſtours, and meddle with Sacraments, muſt be compelled to do the work of Paſtours, and to diſpence the Sacraments in a tollerable order. Though yet we are not for compulſion in any doubtfull points, of leſſer moment, where a difference among the Godly may be tollerated: But that Paſtours ſhould act as no Paſtours, and Re-

ctors of the Churches be as no Rectors, and ſhould cheriſh all ignorance, infidelity, and impiety, and profane Gods Ordinances, and ſubvert the Communion of Saints, and lay the Garden of Chriſt open to the common wilderneſs, and thereby make all ſeeme ſingular to the people, that will not do as wickedly as theſe; this is not to be tolerated; but the Commiſſioners for ejecting ſcandalous Miniſters, with the advice of the Aſſiſtants, ſhould have power to correct them, and in caſe of obſtinate unreformedneſs to eject them: Not to ſilence them from preaching to the Catechumens or any; but to prohibite them from the actions proper to Church Rulers or Paſtours, till they will performe them more agreeably to the Scripture Rule.

And this compulſion alſo of the Miniſters, we deſire eſpecially for the peoples ſake, who we are content ſhould be excuſed themſelves from any ſuch penal Laws, to reſtraine them from Sacraments; but when they know that Miniſters are under ſuch penalties, they will beare it at their hands, and take it the better, when we deale with them, as the Word of God requireth. I heare it with my eares, to the grief of my heart, how ſome of my neighbour Miniſters are ſpoken againſt, with bitterneſs

bitterneſs by their people, becauſe they give not the Lords Supper to all, even to the moſt ignorant and ungodly, that refuſe to be inſtructed; or ſo much as to take themſelves for any members of the Miniſters charge: And that which they ſay is, that *though Biſhops and Common Prayer be taken down, yet the giving of the Sacrament to all the Pariſh, is not taken down.* And they that now ſubmit ſo quietly to the diſuſing of many other things, becauſe Miniſters are puniſhable if they uſe them, would alſo do the like in this caſe. And yet if you are jealous, that Miniſters will go as far on the other hand, in refuſing the people that are not to be refuſed, (though with one of an hundred, there's little feare of that) we are contented that you looke to us alſo in this: To which end theſe two things will be ſufficient. 1. Let the Magiſtrate joyne with the Paſtours and Delegates of the Church in their meetings, where Church-affaires are tranſacted, that he may ſee what we do. If there be no Juſtice of Peace in the Pariſh, let every Church have a Church-Magiſtrate purpoſely choſen by the chief Magiſtrate; or ſome Agent on his behalf deputed hereunto. 2. And let the Magiſtrates Agent acquaint the Commiſſioners how things are tranſacted, in caſes of Com-

Complaint, and let them by the advise of the Assistant Ministers, correct us as we deserve, if you should imagine this to be necessary.

Direct. 4. The Magistrate should promote, encourage, countenance, yea command the Pastours to Associations and Brotherly correspondencies, for the more cautelous, and vigorous, and effectual management of these works; and for the concatenation and Communion of Churches, and the right understanding of each others affaires; that he that hath Communion in one Church, may by Communicatory Letters, have Communion in any of the rest; and he that is cast or kept out of one, may not be received by the rest, till it be proved that he is excluded unjustly. And those that joyne not so fully as the rest, may yet be provoked to owne one another, as farre as they can; that so we may maintaine brotherly Love, with all that differ from us by tollerable defferences; and may own them as Churches, though we cannot own their different opinions or waies; and may have such Communion with them, as we may, and upon their Letters may admit their members to our Communion. This the Magistrate should at leaft openly provoke, and encourage the Churches and Pastours

stours to; seeing no man can doubt whether it be for the edification of the Church.

Direct. 5. For the better promoting of this Necessary work, I conceive it would be a very ready and unquestionable way, for the Magistrate to appoint an able, Godly, moderate Minister, to be a Visiter in each County, or rather in each half or quarter of a County, to see the Churches thus Reformed, and prvoke the several Pastours to their duty, and assist them in it, where there is need: But not to have any Episcopal power to punish, or cast out any Minister, or excommunicate them, suspend them, or the like: But let every Visitor have an Agent of the Magistrate joyned with him, armed with authority to convent the Ministers, and examine witnesses, and do what more the chief Magistrate shall see meet, so that still these two Visitors go together, but have not the same Authority or work; but let the Minister only enquire, direct, exhort, and give account and advice to the civil Visiter; and let the civil Visiter have all the Coercive Power: And let both of them transmit such causes as are exempt from their determination, to the Commissioners for ejecting scandalous Ministers, who by the advise of the Assistant Ministers may determin them. These Visi-

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ters did very much to the firſt and great Reformation of *Scotland*, when Popery had overrun all: Nor did they Scruple the uſing of them, for all that they were againſt Prelacy.

Direct. 6. It is one of the chief and unqueſtionable parts of the Magiſtrats duty, in order to the Reformation and Peace of the Churches, and the ſaving of mens Souls, to ſee that dangerous Seducers be reſtrained, from infecting and carrying away the ignorant, ungodly, diſcontented people, that are kept under Miniſterial Teaching, as Expectants. I do not move to have men driven into our Churches: Nor do I move to have an unneceſſary reſtraint laid upon mens tongues or pens, in caſe of tollerable differences, among the Servants of Chriſt. In this caſe I only deſire now, that the Diſſenting Godly Brethren, would agree together, to meddle with their differences no more

In the Ancient Church the Catechumeni were not ſuffered to ſit with the Church-members, but had a ſeparated place by themſelves; and *Tertullian* accuſeth the Hereticks for breaking this order, *ut vid.* Albaſpin. *in* Tertul. *de Præſcription. c.* 41. *p.* 306. He blames them alſo that they ſuffered them to joyne with the Church in Praiers, and other holy Worſhip *ut* Albaſpin. *ibid.*

more then needs, and to manage their Disagreements with such Cautions, and in such manner, and season, and measure, as may least hinder their success in the common work, *viz.* the promoting of the common Fundamental Verities, and the converting and saving of the Ignorant and ungodly, and getting down the reigning sinnes of the world. And then they will find, 1. That if there be any truth in the private Opinions, which they would propagate, it will farre easier be received, when the minds of their brethren are sedate and peaceable, then when they are allarmed to the conflict, by unseasonable preaching for the said Opinions. 2. And that the Errours (of this lower nature among Brethren) which some feare a tolleration of, will sooner die of themselves for want of fewel in such Peaceable deportment, then when the bellowes of opposition, contradiction, reproach, and violence are blowing them up, and putting life continually into them. For most Dividers are proud and selfish, and must needs be noted, for somewhat extraordinary: And you take the principal way to animate them, when you make so much ado with them: Whereas a few yeares neglect, and not observing them, as if there were no such men in the world, (unless

leſs when they impoſe a Neceſſity on us) would more happily extinguiſh them. I ſpeak but what I have ſeen and tryed. This therefore is not the matter of my preſent requeſt, that Magiſtrates would uſe rigor and violence with godly men, about tollerable differences; which the Power of greater Light and Love in the contrary minded, is the principal means to reconcile.

But the thing requeſted now of Magiſtrates is, that they would keep out the Wolves, while we are feeding the Sheep, or help us in it. That they ſuffer not damnable deceivers, or any that plainly go about to ſubvert mens Souls, or the ſtate of the Church, to fall in with our Ignorant, ungodly people, in the time of their Learning and Expectancy. And as I ſhall be ready againſt any Libertine, Infidel, or Papiſt in the world, to prove this to be in the Magiſtrates Power, and his flat duty (of which I hope no ſober Chriſtian doubteth) ſo I ſhall here lay before the Magiſtrate, the Reaſons that ſhall evince the need of his help, in the preſent caſe.

Reaſon 1. The people that we now ſpeak of, are ſo utterly ignorant, that it's eaſy to deceive them. It's no diſhonour to Truth, that a foole, or a child my be deluded: but ſuch

such are not to be left to the malice and craft of jugling enemies.

Reason 2. So wicked are the hearts of those, that we now speak of (or many of them) that they are prepared for *Deceit*, and willing of it *Materially*, though not *Formally*, as such. It's easy drawing men from that which they hate, or their hearts are bent against, and to that which they Love, and their hearts are set upon. Such gunpowder will soon take fire.

Reason 3. Our people by the forementioned work of Reformation, will undoubtedly be cast into *Discontents*: They will be sorely displeased with their Teachers; which is a small matter, were it not that it hindreth their own Salvation. They have so long been used to have their own will, and to be admitted even in Heathenish Ignorance and Impiety to the Communion of the Saints, and all the outward Priviledges, without any considerable exercise of Discipline over them, that now it will be a strange provoking thing to them, when their custom shall be altered. So that in the discontent and hatred of their minds, if Infidels, or Papists, or any such Malignant adversaries shall come among them, their own malignity and discontent, will drive them by multi-

multitudes into their nets; and they will turn to the firſt that comes with any plauſible though pernicious doctrine. With half an eie we may eaſily ſee this: And therefore, if the Magiſtrate will not help us to quiet and ſecure the people, and keep off deceivers, while we are Catechiſing, and Inſtructing, and Preparing the groſly Ignorant and ungodly, it will be to the hazard of many thouſand ſouls, and a temptation to many faint-hearted Miniſters, againe to caſt open the hedge, and lay the Churches Communion common, for feare of the ill conſequence, that will follow to the people by diſpleaſing them.

And yet I may well conclude, that though ſtill the Church will have need of ſome of the Magiſtrates help in this ſame way, yet nothing ſo much hereafter, as at firſt. 1 It is *Cuſtom* that moſt holdeth the people now, and enrageth them againſt the breakers of it. And when once the *Cuſtom* is broken and turned, they will be much more quiet. 2. We now find the Churches in the rubbiſh, and have the harſheſt work at firſt to do, which will ſoone be over, and the Churches and minds of men more ſetled. 3. A few yeares Practiſe of Confirmation, in the foredeſcribed way, I hope will introduce ſuch abundance

of

of Knowledg, and ſo increaſe the face of Godlineſs, that we ſhall have little need of the Magiſtrates helpe, in this kind as now we have. But now at firſt our Neceſſity is very great.

Reaſon 4. Moreover, our Doctrine and Practice is moſt contrary to mens ſinnes, and carnall Intereſt, and therefore though it be *True*, yet it is *Provoking*, and ſeemeth to be againſt them; as blood letting, Faſting, and bitter medicines to a Child, or a fooliſh Patient. And therefore no wonder, if tolerated Seducers can draw them from it, by ſence or non-ſence, in ſuch a caſe. A little Reaſon ſeemes to take men off from that, which ſeemes againſt them, or which they hate.

Reaſon 5. On the contrary, the Doctrine and Practice of Deceivers, is ſuited to their nature, and purpoſely ſugered for them by Art. For Inſtance: If Papiſts fall in with them in the depth of their diſcontent, and firſt raile at us as no Miniſters, but Lyars and Hereticks; and then revile us for receiving maintenance (which is their way, though their Clergie receive ſo exceedingly much more) and then tell them of all their Anceſtours, and then ſet them upon an eaſy, outſide Piety, which *ex opere*

operato, will certainly conferre grace, and ſhall take up at the ſtricteſt with an Auricular Confeſſion, inſtead of neceſſary humiliation and true Church-Diſcipline; and ſhall make thoſe veniall, and improper ſinnes, which we make damnable; and ſhall ſend many but to Purgrtory, that according to Scripture, we ſend to Hell. In a word, when they ſhall comply with carnal hearts and Intereſts, but as much, as *Montalte* the *Janſenian* ſheweth us, that the Jeſuites do; what wonder if our Ignorant, diſcontented people, do greedily ſwallow ſuch baits as theſe, and turn to ſuch a kind of Religiouſneſs? And this makes the Jeſuites glad of our Reformation, and ſtand by us as the Crows by Sheep, that they may have our leavings, or all that we cut off: For it's *Number* that they regard; and if they will but believe in the Pope, they ſhall be welcom to them; yea, be Catholikes and be ſaved, though they believe not in Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt, nor know not what Chriſtianity is. He that thinks I wrong them: 1. Let them look on millions, and millions in their Churches. 2. Let him but read * *Fr. a Sancta Clara, Problem.* 15, & 16.

* In his *Deus, natura Gratia:* where abundance more are cited of his ſide.

Reaſon 6.

Reason 6. The Adversaries also are very industrious, and have many advantages of us from without. In most Churches they will meet, though with Godly, yet with young, unexperienced Disputers; because our Ministery is but Reviving, and the young ones must have time to grow. And the Jesuites, Fryars and other Missioners, have a Pope and Cardinals, and Bishops, and Princes, and Lords, and Revenews, and wealth, and Seminaries, and trayned Soldiers in abundance, at their backs beyond-Sea, to furnish them with continual supply. And how eager and busy they are, the Christian world hath had long experience: so that if such be let loose on Ignorant Souls, what wonder if they prevaile?

Reason 7. And for the Event, if the Magistrates shall refuse us this Reasonable and unquestionably lawfull aide, it may be the means of the damnation of many thousand Souls. I suppose I speak to Christians, that believe that sinne is the poyson of the Soul, and believe that Faith in Christ is necessary, and that there is a Heaven and a Hell: And if so, they must needs understand, what it is, to suffer men to draw their Subjects from Christ, from Scripture, from the meanes of Grace, and a Holy Life; and

to draw them into ſinne: that this is but to give men leave to do their worſt, to undo and damne as many as they can; and to take them at the greateſt vantage in their Ignorance and diſcontent to trip up their heels, and tiſe them into Hell. How dreadfull a thing is this to a Magiſtrate, once to think of, that hath but any belief of Scripture, and pitty on the Souls of men. And therefore (as long as we do not now call upon them, ſo much as to force Papiſts, or Infidels either to be of our Religion, or to profeſs that they are ſo, or joyne in Communion with us, but only deſire, that they may keep their venom to themſelves, and may not be ſuffered to take the advantage of our peoples Ignorance and Diſcontent) undoubtedly the Rulers that are friends to Chriſt, and the Souls of men, will never find in their hearts, to deny this aſſiſtance.

Reaſon 8. And if they ſhould deny it, in Reaſon they muſt needs ſee, that they will fully give up the Churches of Chriſt, that are under their government, to diſtraction and confuſion. They know well enough what would come of it, if every man have but liberty to perſwade their Armies into Mutinies and Rebellion; or to perſwade the

Subjects

Subjects againſt themſelves, that Rule them; or to entice mens Children, or ſervants to lewdneſs, or their wives to unchaſtity. And will they, under pretence of Mercy or Liberty, permit men to do that againſt Chriſt, and the Church, and the Souls of many that are bad enough already, which they would not, they durſt not permit againſt mens bodies, or againſt themſelves, or againſt the Peace of the Common-wealth.

And what a diſhonour will it be to Chriſt, to the Church, and Reformation, and Religion; and what a joy to all the Enemies of theſe, to ſee that our Reformation ſhall breed ſuch Confuſion, and bring upon us ſuch inconveniencies? And all becauſe the Magiſtrate ſhall refuſe his help.

Reaſon 9. And perhaps, the Magiſtrates will quickly find, that the Diſtractions of the Church will breed, and feed ſuch Diſtractions in the Common-wealth, as may make them wiſh they had quenched the fire, while it was yet quenchable. Our Unity is not only *Our* ſtrength, but *their* ſtrength, eſpecially if they promote it. Our Diviſions weaken us as well as them. What will the Magiſtrate do, if he help us not in this caſe? Miniſters cannot in Conſcience alwaies forbeare their Duty, but will ſet about

it? Either the Rulers will *ſuffer* us to do it, *or not*: If they *ſuffer us and aſſiſt us*, it will be our Peace and theirs, and our peoples good: If they *ſuffer us and aſſiſt us not*, as is now deſired, we ſhall exaſperate ſo many of their Subjects by our Reformation, and ſhutting them from Church Communion, that will ſhake the Peace of the Commonwealth, and the *Odium* will fly on the Governours, for ſetting up a Miniſtry that ſo provoketh them, and ſo the people will be ſtill in Diſcontents, and prepared for Rebellion, or any violent change. And the fire that begun in the Church, if it be let alone, may reach the Court. But if to mend this, they will *put down or hinder Miniſters*, their perſecution will bring Gods Judgments on them, and turn the hearts of honeſt, ſober men againſt them. They have ſeen what Deformation and perſecution have done, before their eies.

Reaſon 10. Laſtly, it will bring a moſt heavy Guilt on the Magiſtrates Soul, which he will never be able to ſtand under, before the King of all the world. To be Guilty of the neglect of an Office ſo Divine, received from God, that it might be uſed for him; and to be Guilty of the fruſtrating of much of our Miniſterial work; and of grieving the hearts

hearts of ſo many that feare God, and fruſtrating ſuch hopes as we lately had, (to ſay nothing of the Prayers, teares, hazards, blood, and ruine of ſo many thouſand, and the promiſes, oaths and Covenants to God) to be guilty of the ſinnes of ſo many thouſand, and of their everlaſting Condemnation; to be guilty of the diſtractions, and betraying of the Church, and cauſe, and people of the Lord, and to be guilty of the inſultings of ſo many Enemies, all this and much more, that would certainly follow the denial of this moderate neceſſary help, would be a burden intollerable.

Direct. 7. But becauſe both the Magiſtrates, and many others are afraid, leſt by going too far in ſuch affiſtance, they may be guilty of Perſecution, by reſtraining men from Preaching, or private peſwaſion, or by keeping the Ignorant and wicked from Church-Communion, or by compelling them to come to heare, and to be perſonally Inſtructed, I humbly propound theſe following things, for ſuch a Regulation of their granted Liberty, as may free them from all danger of perſecuting, without depriving us of their principall help.

1. If you compel not the Ignorant and ungodly to heare, and be peſonally Inſtructed, by the Miniſter of the Pariſh where they live, yet at leaſt compel them thus to ſubmit to ſome Miniſter: and let that Miniſter certifie under his hand, that he takes care of him as a Catechumene, or Expectant, by publike and private Inſtruction.

2. Let not every man that will, be tolerated either to Teach, perſwade, or hold Aſſemblies; but let your Toleration be Regulated, as well as your Approbation is. To which end 1. Let ſuch perſons as are thought meet for ſuch a worke, be appointed as Comiſſioners, to Approve, or Judge of ſuch as ſhall be Tolerated through the Land, as the Commiſſioners now Approved of ſuch, as ſhall have the publike maintenance. For there is no Reaſon, that the Tollerated ſhould not go under Tryal, as well as the Allowed. And indeed without ſome ſuch courſe to keep the Doore of Toleration, as well as the doore of publike Allowed Teachers, you cannot put any reaſonable Laws for Toleration in Execution; but any will come in, what ever your Law ſay. 2. Let theſe Commiſſioners for Trying the Tolerated, have Rules

given

given them by the Lawgivers, whom to Licence, or Tolerate, and whom not. 3. Let all that will gather Aſſemblies, or adminiſter Sacraments, or Preach, have an Inſtrument of Toleration, under the hands and ſeale of theſe Commiſſioners, and let them be hindered, that have no ſuch Inſtrument. Otherwiſe if you ſtay till they are convict of Blaſphemie, they may do more miſchief firſt, (for who will perſecute them) then ever the Magiſtrate can comfortably be accountable to God for ſuffering.

7. When a man hath a ſealed Toleration, to Preach, or hold Aſſemblies, let him yet be as liable to any juſt Accuſation, before the Commiſſioners for Ejection, as the Approved, publike Miniſters are: That ſo if he be proved to be wicked and ſcandalous, or to preach any thing excepted from Toleration, by the Legiſlatours, the ſaid Commiſſioners may be Authorized, to deprive them of their Toleration, as they do others of their publique ſtation and maintenance. And this is a moſt Reaſonable and neceſſary thing.

1. For elſe the Publike Miniſters will be hardlier dealt with then they. It is ſuppoſed that there's ſo much difference in the ſound-

soundeſs of their Doctrine, that one deſerveth the publike encouragement, as well as the other deſerveth a Toleration: Or elſe the Law-givers, would make no difference. And that being ſuppoſed, if they ſhall not be queſtionable, as well as we, nor their Right forfeitable as well as ours, they are more cheriſhed proportionably then others.

2. And if you do not this, it's as good do nothing, but openly Licenſe Heathens, and Papiſts, and all Blaſpheamers: For they will make a faire Confeſſion, till they have got their ſeald Toleration, and then preach contrary to that profeſſion. Two ſorts we know this to be true by: 1. Papiſts, that are for Equivocation, and Mental Reſervation, in their Profeſſions and Oathes: or for the Popes to diſpenſe with them. 2. Heathens and Infidels that believe not, that there is any ſinne, or Devil, or Hell, or Heaven, and therefore care not what they ſweare. And indeed theſe

I humbly propound it to the Conſideration of the Soveraigne Rulers, whether it be not fit, that the Teſtimonies of theſe two ſorts of men, in any weighty caſe, againſt another be invalidate. And is it not a pitifull caſe that the lives of the godly people whom they hate, ſhall be at the mercy of any two of theſe

these are the two Sects that now are up: and all other are like to fall into these. Alas by sad experience I speake it: Those that will openly, and to my face make an Orthodoxe confession, do secretly harden many poor Souls, by making a scorne of Scripture, as a fable, and of the Immortality of the Soul, and of Christ and the Holy Ghost, and Heaven and Hell, and say all these are nothing, but the inventions of men, and that the Knave-Priests do perswade men that there are Devils, and Hell, as a bugbeare to make them do what they would have them, and all Religion is but deceit. Such Heathens, are the predominant Sect in many places, and higher in *England*, then once I thought to have seen them. And if all such perfidious Infidels and Jesuites, shall have leave to Blaspheame God, Christ, and Scripture, because they once made an Orthoeoxe Profession, then let Hell be turned loose upon our people, and the Devil that was bound up from deceiving the Nations, have a Toleration from the Magistrate to do his worst.

wretches, that make no more of an oath then of another word.

Thus I have shewed that Magistrates, if they will, may helpe the Church without any

any danger of perſecuting the Truth, if they take not Popery, damnable Hereſie, and Heatheniſm for Truth. 1. If the Approvers keep the doore of Toleration, as well as of Publike Maintenance and Miniſtry. 2. If a Church Juſtice, or Civil Agent, do keep the Churches Peace. 3. If the Civil Viſiter do purpoſely take cogniſance of the ſtate of Pariſhes, and ſee the Laws put in execution. 4. If the Commiſſioners for Ejections, have power of Judging all Seducers, and Blaſpheamers, as well as the publike Miniſters. And if theſe only have the Coercive Power; but ſome able, choſen, godly Miniſters be joyned with them for Advice and Exhortation: as Magiſtrates and Miniſters ſate together before the daies of *William the Conquerour*.

Joh. 13. 17. *If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them.* Luke 12. 47. *And the ſervant which knew his Lords will, and prepared not, nor did according to his will, ſhall be beaten much.*

Finitur *Hebr.* 13. 1648.

Postscript.

READER,

AS great and needfull a duty as this is, that I have here proposed, and as clear as it is, and commonly agreed on by all the Parties before mentioned, I am yet far from expecting, that all men should acknowledg it and obey it; or that no person of contrary apprehensions or intentions, should rise up against it as an enemy, with all the strength that the measure of his wit and passions can prepare. We cannot speak for God himself, for Christ, for Scripture, for mens own Salvation, but we meet with contradiction and resistance, even from them that we would save. And were it not for this, what blessed work would the Gospel make? and why might we not hope, that all our people should be saved? No wonder then, if when ever we attempt Reformation or Reconciliation, we meet with Learned, Reverend Brethen that come against us, armed with plausible cavils, and contempts, and cast away the medicine as dangerous, or ungrate-

Nunquam enim, ait Lutherus *periclitatur Ecclesia nisi inter Reverendissimos.*

ungratefull, and ſtrenuouſly vindicate the Diſeaſe that ſhould be healed: And were it not that the Church hath many, very many ſuch, what ſhould have kept us unhealed ſo long? And who could have continued our deformities and diviſions, and fruſtrated ſuch means as have been uſed for our cure? Satan is not ſo poore a Politician, as to be without his Agents in our Eccleſiaſtike Armies, and Councils, and Pulpits to ſpeak for his cauſe and do his work, and reſiſt and fruſtrate that which would diſpleaſe him; and all this under pretence of enmity to Satan, and friendſhip to Chriſt, and a better doing of his work. As the names of the chiefeſt of Chriſt Servants, were not caſt out as Holy, but as evil, *Luk.* 6. 22. So their Doctrine was not caſt out as *Truth*, nor as *Saving*, but as *Deceit*. And his *Meanes* will not be openly reſiſted, (at leaſt by thoſe that are building with us) as *Reforming* or *Reconciling*, but as *groundleſs* or *unproved*, or *troubleſome*, or *unſeaſonable*, or as ſuſpected of ſome ill deſigne, or event. Some will ſay, it is meere Prelacie, or a Prelatical deſigne: and ſome that it is Independancie, or an Independant deſigne: and ſome that it is but Presbyterian Examination. Whereas they might know, that it is proper to none of them,

them, which is common to them all. If it be Prelacie, how comes it to be found with Independants? If it be Independancy, how comes it to be approved by Prelates, and Presbyterians? Is it not rather like Christianity it self, and the Truths and Duties which we commonly own; and therefore not to be appropriated to any.

By all that I have heard and read of late, concerning this Subject, I understand that the principal Objections that are likely to be used against the Doctrine of this Treatise, are these following.

Object. *We were all Baptized in our Infancy, and therefore are Church-members, and have Right to the Priviledges of the Adult, when We are Adult, Without any new Title or Condition: Our first Right continueth, though We never make Profession of the Christian Faith, nor personally renewed the Covenant with God that we made in Baptism. And therefore though in some cases, such an approved Profession be a duty, yet is not any more Necessary to our Church-state, and Right to the Communion of the Adult, then that We were borne Church-members, and so Baptized. Nothing but Heresie, Schisme, or Apostacie can cut us off. And therefore all that were Baptized, and are not thus cut off,*

are

are ſtill Church-members, and have Right to all the Ordinances in the Church.

Anſw. 1. I have ſaid enough to this already to ſatisfie the conſiderate impartial Reader; proving the Neceſſity of a perſonall Faith before God, and of ſome Profeſſion of it *Eccleſia Judice*, before the Church, to the Being of the ſaid Title of the Adult, as its Condition: and that all Scripture-Examples do make for the Confirmation of this Truth. Moreover let me adde, to anſwer the new, or foreſeen aſſaults,

1. If there be no word of Promiſe in the Scripture, that giveth the Priviledge of Adult-Communion to any, upon their Infant title-condition only, nor any example in the Goſpel, or the ancient Church, that any poſſeſſed or uſed that Priviledg upon that Title-condition only, then are we not to imagine that the Infant Title-condition alone, is ſufficient to the ſaid Priviledge: But the Antecedent is true; as hath in part been manifeſted, and will be more, when the Diſſenter ſhall bring forth his pretended Evidences, by which his Title ſhould be proved.

2. The Title-condition of Infants is not ſufficient to make any morally capable of the *Ends* of Adult-Communion: therefore it is

not

not sufficient to make them capable of a proper, plenary Right to such Communion. For the *Right* and *Relation* are for these *Ends*; if a natural incapacity may consist with a Plenary Title, so cannot a Moral. No man can really possess and exercise the Communion of the Adult intrinsically without Faith, or extrinsecall without Profession of Faith: therefore no man without Faith or Profession of Faith, can have a plenary Right to that Communion. For a man to have a plenary Right to praise God, and celeberate with the Church the memorial of our Redemption, and participate of the Redeemer, and his Benefits, that believeth not in him, is a palpable absurdity.

3. If the meer Title-Condition of Infants will serve *in foro Ecclesiæ*, for the Adult, then it will serve also *in foro Dei*: For the Church looks but to the outward appearance, or visibility of that, whose Reality and sincerity God expecteth. And it is Gods Covenant that giveth us our Right: and therefore if the Church find us to have true Right, it must find us receiving it from Gods Covenant; and therefore find us the heires of the promise: The Reason why the Church takes our Birth-Priviledges for a sufficient Title-Condition, is because God is supposed

so to take it. But that this will not serve the Adult *in foro Dei* is manifest; because God will not own such Infidels, as neither have Faith, nor a Profession of it.

4. If the Title-Condition of Infidels may serve them when Adult, then is there no personal difference in acts or, qualities; no not so much as in Profession, required on our part, to distinguish Christians from Infidels and Atheists: (*required* I mean as necessary Conditions) But the Consequent is absurd: therefore so is the Antecedent. If no differencing character between Actual Believers and Infidels or Atheists, be made thus necessary, then the Church and the the Infidel world, are laid together; and the Body of Christ, and consequently Christ himself is dishonoured, and blaspheamed, as common and uncleane. But if any personal difference be necessary, it must be the personal Profession of Christianity, or nothing lesse then this can be it. For our Birth-Priviledge cannot be it. Atheists and Infidels are borne of Christian Parents. Much of the Turkish Army of *Janizaries*, have their Birth-Priviledges to shew, as well as we. It is a probable Argument: *Such an Infant is borne of Christian Parents: therefore he will be an Actual Believer.* But it is not a *probable*

bable Argument, *Such a man at age, that professeth not Christianity, had Christian Parents; therefore he is a believer:* much less; *therefore he had Right to the Benefits of the Covenant, whether he be an Actual Believer or not.* If Christians have no visible note, by which they must be known from Infidels, then either the Church is not Visible, or Infidels may be the Visible Church, without so much as disowning their Infidelity.

5. If the Title-Condition of Infants may suffice the Adult for Church-Right and Communion, then Hereticks and Apostates have such Right: But the Consequent is denyed by them that I now dispute with. They confess that Heresie and some Schism, and Apostacie, do cut off from the Church, and so from this Right. But it's plaine that such Hereticks and Apostates have that which was their Infant-Condition: as they were the seed of Believers in Infancy, so they are since Apostacy: They cease not to be the seed of Believers, by their renouncing Christ. If this therefore would prove a Right in *silent* Infidels, it will prove a Right in *profest* Apostates.

Object. *The Apostates cast away their Right, and therefore have it not.*

Answ. 1. Either it dependeth on their

own wills when they come to age, or not. If it do not, then they cannot cast it away. They may refuse to use their Right, but they cannot cast it away, or nullifie it: For they cannot make themselves not to be the Children of Christian Parents. The foundation stands whether they will or no: and therefore so must the Relation. But if the Relation or Right do now depend upon their *own wills*, then our cause is granted; for from their *wills* then must the Condition, or Evidence be fetcht. 2. Yea such persons, ordinarily as we have now in question, are *actual Apostates*, and are so to be taken by the Church; and therefore not to be taken as Church-members, having Right to Sacraments. He that being engaged to God the Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghost in his Infancy, doth make no Profession of actual Faith at full age, is ordinarily to be taken for an Apostate: But such are the persons in question. I say *Ordinarily*, because I except them that have been cast upon natural impossibilities or impotency, or wanted a call and opportunity: that is, all persons that prove Ideots, or deafe and dumbe, or otherwise destitute of natural capacity; such come not to the use of Reason and free-will, and therefore are not bound to Actual beleif.

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Such alſo as have their tongues cut out, are ſeparated from Humane ſociety, or otherwiſe diſabled from Profeſſion. But for the common caſe of mankind. 1. It is plaine that they have their tongues given them by nature to expreſs their minds; and 2. That Chriſt commandeth Confeſſion with the tongue, and profeſſing him before men. 3. That much of his Worſhip lieth in holy Profeſſion, and all of it containeth anſwerable Profeſſion. 4. That we have conſtant calls from God, even to profeſs our Chriſtianity: the godly and the wicked that live among us call us to it: we have daily invitations to profeſs our Chriſtianity one way or other. And among all theſe occaſions of Profeſſion, he that Profeſſeth not, is to be taken for an Infidel and Apoſtate. For the buſineſs is ſo exceeding great and weighty, and the Object ſo glorious, and the duty ſo incumbent, and the very Life of Chriſtianity ſo inconſiſtent with a non-profeſſion, that we have juſt reaſon to conclude, that he that Profeſſeth not himſelf a Chriſtian, ordinarily is to be taken for none by the Church.

Object. *But though at the firſt admitting of a forrainer into a Common-wealth, you require an Oath of fidelity, or Profeſſion of*

subjection, yet when we are borne Subjects, we must be supposed to continue such, till we Rebel, and so declare the contrary; and our fidelity is not to be questioned.

Answ. 1. The case doth exceedingly differ from ours in hand. Princes vary their Commands as their affaires require. If you are borne in the midst of a peaceable Republike, you may perhaps have no oath of fidelity imposed, because the Peace of the Commom-wealth requireth it not: For while there is no enemy neer you, to solicite you to rebellion or treason, or with whom you may conjoyn, it is supposed, that you have either no mind, or no power to it. And it is only the common peace that is concerned in the cause. But our case is otherwise: For we live among Devils and wicked men, and are known to have hearts our selves, that are naturally treacherous, and at enmity to God. So that we are still among enemies, that would seduce us, and with whom we are enclined to take part. And besides that, our Profession is not only necessary to the common safety, but to our personal performances, and daily Communion with the Saints, and worship of God. 2. If it be in a Garison that's neer the enemy, or in a Country that is inclined to Rebellion, or where Re-

bellion is on foot, and the enemy hath a party, there Princes use to cause all their Subjects to take an oath of fidelity; and ordinarily also in peaceable Kingdoms this is practised: At such an age all persons are to take an oath of Allegiance, or fidelity, or to make Profession of their subjection, in many places: and in other places they do it, before they enter upon any office. And if you will come neerer the case, and suppose that men were borne in a Schoole, or an Army, as well as a Republike, I think you would yield, that when they come to age, it is necessary that they have more then their Birth-Priviledg to shew, to prove them Schollars, or Soldiers. We are Christs Disciples and Soldiers, as well as his Subjects; and one is as essential to our Christianity as the other. We may be initiated into his School and Army in our Infancy, and so stand Related to him: But sure we are Apostates, if when we come to age, we have nothing to shew but our meer Infant-Condition; and to more we must be called. 3. The case also differeth in this: Princes do make known to all in their Laws, that no man that is an enemy, yea or that is not (*pro tempore*) a Subject, shall dwell on their Soile, among their Subjects: They suffer not Subjects and Enemies to live promiscuously.

miscuously together in their dominions: and therefore it is supposed that a mans very abode and residence in their land, is a profession of Subjection: much more when they live in obedience to the Laws, and hold their estates by them. But Christ dealeth not thus: He suffereth Believers and Infidels to live together, and his flock to be but little in the world; so that it cannot be the least presumption, that a man is a Christian, because he liveth among Christians. 4. At least let us not teach Christ, what he should have done, when we find he hath done otherwise; we find that he requireth personall Faith and profession of all at age, that are naturally capable; and therefore we must perform it, and not give reasons why we should not do it. No good Subject that's called to profess his fidelity will refuse, and say, you have no reason to question me, and put such a Tryall or obligation upon me.

So that I may conclude, that an Adult person not professing *Christianity* is not a visible Christian, notwithstanding his birth-priviledges: and therefore not a visible Church-member; and therefore an Apostate, seeing he was once engaged in Covenant to Christ, (though not an Apostate from actuall Faith) and therefore such as hath no proper right to

Church-communion and priviledges.

Object. *If his Infant Title be cut off, it is either by Ignorance, Wickednesse, Heresie, or Schism, or Apostacie: but ignorance and wickednes do not cut him off; and Heresie, Schism, or Apostacie he is not guilty of; therefore, &c.*

Answ. 1. His Infant Title will cease of it self without any other cutting off, if it be not continued by his personall actuall believing, when he comes to capable age. His birth-priviledges alone, or his *Parents* dedicating him to God in Baptism, will serve no longer of it self. It is therefore for want of *Personal Faith Coram Deo*, and of the profession of Faith *Coram ecclesiâ*, that his right doth cease.

2. Ignorance, where it proveth Infidelity, must needs prove a Cessation of the Infant Title, when they come to a capable age, and ignorance is privative. He that knoweth not, that there is a God, a Christ, or what he hath done for us, or what a Christian is, can have no Faith in God, or Christ; and therefore is an Atheist, and an Infidell privatively, if at a capable age, among meanes at least. It is not only he that denyeth Christ, that is an Infidell, but he that never heard of him, Negatively at least; and he that having heard of him, understood not what he heard, and therefore believeth not in him, because he knoweth not.

And

And it is not only he that denyeth God, that is an Atheist, but he that knoweth not that there is a God. And therefore if ignorance cut not off, then Infidelity and Atheism cut not off. And if neither of these cut off, then no particular Heresie can: nor any such Apostasie, as men are capable of, that had but an Infant Church-state: gross ignorance at a capable age, proveth gross ungodlinesse, and Apostasie. For if mens hearts had bin towards God, they would have sought to know him, and if they know him not, their hearts are Atheisticall, and without him.

3. Wickedness is either such as may consist with habituall adhering to God in Christ; or such as shews a separation or renunciation; the one being ungodliness partiall, and *quoad actum particularem*, (as *Peter's* deniall) and the other being *ungodlinesse quoad statum*. He that saith the former cutteth not off from the Church, will scarcely say, that it doth not meritoriously suspend the Offender from the Communion of the Church, till he appear penitent. And he that saith the latter cuts not off, from the Church, meritoriously, must say that nothing doth it. For this is Apostacie, and comprehendeth the greatest Heresie. Such Heretieks hold that the pleasure of sin for a season, is to be chosen before a life

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of Holiness with the Hopes of Everlasting life; and the flesh to be pleased before the Lord: And I think this is Heresie. But whether these be cut off from the Church or not, either they bring the person under the guilt of excommunication, or else there is no excommunication to be used. And if they be excommunicated, we shall not much contend with you about their rights. As long as you grant that they have no such right as that they may have the use of Church-communion, we are satisfied. And yet I must say, that it is a blind conclusion, that the excommunicate are Church-members, without distinguishing of excommunication. If a man shall openly declare that he believeth not in Jesus Christ that dyed at *Jerusalem*, nor that there is any life to come; but yet he believeth in a Christ within him, and a Heaven and Hell within men; (as the Ranters, Familists, *&c.* did) and yet this man, that he may pervert the souls of others, will hold communion with the Church, and declare, that he takes the Scripture in his sense, I doubt not but this man, though a professed Infidell and Apostate, is yet to be excommunicated, while he pretendeth to Communion; and if this excommunicate man be not out of the Catholike Church, then no man is out of it, and you may next

question

question whether the Devill be not a Member, that believeth much more then he.

But when I say that Infidelity, Impiety, Heresie, do cut off or cast out, I meane it but *Meritoriously*. Either these crimes are *private and unknown*, or *provable*. If not provable, then they *merit* this, and more *Coram Deo*, but not *Ecclesiâ judice*, that is, though there be guilt or demerits, yet we are no capable judges of it. But if the crime be *provable*, then it is either such, as needs a judgment or not. If it need a judgement, the person is only *de jure* cast out before the *sentence* (which is *terminus diminuens* and is not *actuall casting out*) and he is *actually* cast out by the *sentence*, and the *execution*: so that his *sin* cast him out *Meritoriously*, the *Law Obligatorily*, the *Pastors* of the Church *Sententially*, and the *whole Church*, *Pastors and People*, *Executively* in avoiding him. But if there *need no* judgement, then he is excommunicate actually *ipso jure*, by the Law alone, without a Judge, which may be in many a case: As if he be a notorious Infidell, Atheist, Blaspheamer, or notoriously beyond all doubt and controversie one of those, that the Law commands us to avoid; we must execute this Law, though there be no sentence pronounced. The want of a *mans* sentence

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will not excuse us from obeying Gods Laws. And where there is no controversie through the notoriousnes of the case, there needs no Judge.

6. If Birth-priviledge will serve alone for the Adult to prove their Title to the Church-state and priviledges of the Adult, then no man that is born of Christian Parents can be obnoxious to excommunication, or justly excommunicate: For he is still a Child of Believing Parents: and no sin will make them otherwise. And therefore if that were enough, he hath a good Title still. Nay it would follow that he cannot Apostatize; for he cannot fall away from this. But the consequence is absurd, therefore so is the Antecedent.

7. If Infant Title only be sufficient to the Adult, then no Parent is necessarily oblieged to professe himself a Christian, or actuall believer, in order to prove the intereſt of his Child to Baptism (nor any that offer him in the Parents stead.) For it is sufficient if the Parents (or susceptors) say, *We were Infant-members and Baptized, and therefore our Child must be so: but whether we are actuall Believers, now, it is not necessary that we tell you.* But the Consequent is so absurd, that whoever should have offered a Child to Baptism on these terms in the Ancient Church,

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(or any Church that I know of, till very lately) would have bin rejected. The acceptance and Baptism of our Infants, is one of the priviledges of Believers: But no one hath right to this priviledg (that his children be thus accepted into the Church) upon a bare Infant-Title, without the profession of a personall actuall Faith. Therefore, *&c.*

8. If the opposed Doctrine should hold good, then all the world hath right to Church-Communion, (or Millions of Infidels, at least) But the consequent is false: therefore so is the Antecedent. The reason of the Consequence is plain; because *Noah* was a Church-member, and all the world came out of his Loynes: And the men of *Thracia*, *Bithynia*, and most of *Asia*, where Mahomet is worshipped may say, *Our Ancestors were Christians*: Therefore the Birth-priviledges still going down from generation to generation even to the Thousandth generation, it must follow that the present generation of Mahometans and other Infidels, are Church-members still: For they lost not their naturall Relation to their Parents.

9. It will not prove a *Society of Adult* persons to be a *Christian Church*, if they have no more but their Infant-Condition: therefore it will not prove a single person to be

be a Member of the Church. That which is necessary to make a society, a Christian society, is necessary to make a person, a Christian person. But I hope none will deny, but that some kind of Profession is necessary to make, or prove a company of men, to be a Christian Church: therefore some profession is necessary to make, or prove a man, to be a Church-member.

10. If Infant-conditions will suffice to the Adult for Church-membership, and common priviledges, then will they serve for Justification, and Salvation, that are speciall priviledges: But the Consequent is false: therefore so is the Antecedent. The reason of the consequence is, because though the benefits be various, yet the Covenant and Conditions are the same, by which we have right to one and to the other. It is the Appearance of the same Faith, by profession before men, that give Title, *Coram ecclesiâ*, whose inward sincerity giveth right *Coram Deo*, (as was aforesaid) And God giveth Title to all the blessings of the Covenant, *Coram Deo* on the same conditions. And there is also a parity of reason. For if it be enough to prove our right to Adult Communion (to praise God, and have all his ordinances and helps in the Church, *&c.*) that we had Christian Parents, then must it be enough to prove our Title in

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all the rest of our benefits. The ancient Fathers and Churches thought that Baptism did as certainly give the Infant rightly Baptized, a right to pardon of Originall sin, and eternall life, as to outward Church-priviledges. And if the same Covenant give both on the same condition, then he that hath the condition of one, hath of both. I have proved in another Disputation, that God hath not two Covenants of grace on his part, one of spirituall or inward mercies, and another of outward Ordinances; and that he giveth not these inward benefits and the outward signes of them, upon various conditions, but on the same.

11. Faith or the profession of it in the Adult, is either necessary to Church-communion, or unnecessary; if unnecessary, then Christians have no more to do in the Church then Heathens; if necessary, then either as a meer *duty*, or as a condition, or other means Not as a meer duty; for then still the Infidels should be equally received, though not applauded: It must be therefore necessary as a meanes. And the very words of the promise tells us what sort of meanes it is, that makes Faith to be its condition.

12. I would know of my adversary, what he would do with the Son of a Believer that were unbaptized at 40. or 50. years of age? would

would he Baptize him without a profession of actuall Faith of his own, or not? if he would, then he would make new fashioned Christians and Churches; and might Baptize all the posterity of the Apostates, or the ancient Christians in the world, that would consent. Yea, he could not indeed Baptize them; for Baptism essentially containeth a profession of consent unto the Covenant, which therefore others make for Infants, that have the dispose of them. But if he would not Baptize such, without profession, then it seems he takes not their Birth-priviledges to be a sufficient condition of their Title thereunto.

13. A Covenant breaker can claim no right to the benefits of the Covenant (supposing him to violate the main conditions on which the benefits are suspended) But all those at capable age that have nothing but their Infant condition to shew, are Covenant breakers: therefore they have no right to the benefits of the Covenant They therefore were engaged personally to believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, when they came to the use of reason; we have cause therefore to see whether they have broke, or kept this Covenant; and if they have broke it, they can at present claim no Title to the benefits.

14. He *that cometh to God muſt believe that God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*: Therefore thoſe that profeſs not this belief, cannot come to God, and conſequently not have Communion with the Church. *Without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, Heb. 11. 5, 6. Therefore without a profeſſion of Faith, it is impoſſible to have right to juſt Communion; which is purpoſely for the pleaſing of God.

Object. *But* (its ſaid) *Infants have Faith*; that is, *a Relative Faith, and a Fœderall Faith, as well as a Relative Fœderall Holineſs. Their right is not only in their Parents, but in themſelves; and therefore their Faith is in themſelves: and this continueth with the aged, till Hereſie and Schiſme cut it off.*

Anſw. Call any thing under Heaven by the name of Faith, ſo you will but explain your meaning, and we will quarrell as little as may be with you about words: But little know we what you mean by Relative or Fœderall Faith, unleſs it be plainly, to be *ſemen fidelium*, the ſeed of believers: that there is a Relative and Fœderall Holineſs, is *Scripture Doctrine*, and good ſenſe: For the formall nature of the thing is a relation which commonly is expreſſed by the name of Holineſs,

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and which in that phraſe is implyed. But I remember not that Scripture ever ſpeaks of a Relative or Fæderall Faith: For I believe not that it was Infants, that Chriſt calls the *little ones that believe in him.* And Faith being an act or habit, you muſt mean ſome other *ſpecies* of Faith, which conſiſteth in relation. I know it not, nor will I uſe your Language; though I think it more tolerable to call the Infant *Relatively a Believer*, then to ſay he hath *Relative Faith*; for in ſo ſaying, no more is meant, but that he is a *Diſciple of Chriſt*, or *belongs to him* as he is the *Seed of a Believer* in Covenant. But let this word of *Fæderall Relative Faith* be uſed by you as you pleaſe: If the thing ſignified by it be any more then I have expreſſed, you ſhould tell us what you mean: If it be no more but to be the *Seed of a Believer*, then we doubt not but this continueth when they come to age: but it doth them no good at age, as to the continuing of their Title to Church-memberſhip before God without a Faith of their own, nor before the Church without a profeſſion of it. That the Infant himſelf is the Subject of his own Right, is a thing that no man, that I know makes doubt of, that believeth him to have any Right: But the *active* main *condition* of that right is not to be performed by himſelf

but by the *Parent*; and only the *Passive Condition* is to be found in himself, that he be the Seed of that Parent: If he must be a *Believers Seed*, its the *Parent* that must *Believe*: But that will not serve his turne at age, if he do not also believe himself.

15. It is granted by the Dissenters, that the ignorant, for all their Infant Title, have no *Immediate* right to the Communion of the Church. And we will not contend about names: this satisfieth us in the maine. It is not Actuall right, if it be not immediate plenary right: that which they call a remote right, is properly no actuall right, but a term of Diminution, as to it; when right hath two Conditions, you may call it right, when the first and greatest is performed: but actually it is none, till all be performed: For it is still but Conditionall, while any part of the Condition is unperformed, saith Learned Mr *Fullwood*, page 274. *The rule to give all their due, is of indispensable Obligation: but seeing ignorant persons, have no such immediate right in the Supper, what injury or Wrong is there done them?*

Object *But ignorance doth not wholly cut a man off from the Church: For such a knowledge goeth not to the essence of te Church; for its form is Society or Community.*

Answ.

Answer. 1. Its sufficient to our present purpose, that it excludeth men meritoriously from immediate right to the Communion of the Adult. 2. Ignorance *qua talis materially*, is no sin (as in Ideots, Paralyticks, *&c.*) and therfore cuts not off. But ignorance in a Subject, where knowledg should be found, is culpable, and complicate alwaies with Infidelity, or not believing; and therefore doth declare the person to be matter uncapable. If you choose to say, *it cuts not off*, I easily can prove, that it *manifesteth* that he is not in the Invisible, and ought not to be esteemed of the visible Church, by reason of his incapacity; his former Title ceasing, for want of the condition of its continuation. 3. Knowledge in the capable Adult, is an essentiall to the Church, as a *society*. A Church is a *society of Christians*; As it is *a society*, *Christianity* is not essentiall to it, and so not *Knowledge*: For there are *societies* of *Heathens*, and *Infidels* enow. But as it is a *Christian* Society, *Knowledge* is essentiall to it; and therefore, as it is a *Church*. It's essentiall to a field of wheat, that there be *wheat* in it: Or to a heape of wheat, that it be of wheat. And yet not as a *field*, or as a *heap*: for there are

It is totall Ignorance that the Objection extendeth to, or Ignorance of the Christian Faith.

heaps of *dirt* also. The aggregation of a number of individuals, makes it a *Community*, and the form of the body aggregated, as to the mutuall relation of the parts, makes it a Body politick or society. But the essentiall qualification of the Individuals, *viz Christianity*, is essentiall to that society *in specie*, as a *Christian Church*. And *Faith* in the Adult is essentiall to Christianity, and *Knowledge* is essentiall to *Faith*, or inseparable from it.

Object. *Then one should not take another to be a Church-member, till he is satisfied of his Knowledge, which were a stranger thing.*

Answ. Not so strange as true: supposing him an Adult Person capable of Knowledg. For he cannot be satisfied of his Faith, without being satisfied of Knowledg: nor of his Christianity without his Faith: For we are yet unacquainted with the Christian Infidels. But then Consider, what must be satisfactory to other men concerning their Brothers knowledg. It must satisfie them, that he is by the Pastours of the Church, who are to judge, approved and annumerated with Believers: and that he professeth himself to be a Believer, which cannot be without knowledge: This must satisfie them, till he nullifie this evidence, by a clean bewraying of his Infidelity.

Object.

Object. *But the Scripture saith not that ignorant persons cannot be Church-members, or so much as that they ought meerly for their ignorance to be excommunicate.* *Answ.* Doth not the Scripture exclude visible unbelievers, and take in only visible believers (of the Adult) and make the Church a society of Believers separated from unbelievers? Such ignorance therefore as is essentiall to, or inseparable from Infidelity, is in Scripture made the very brand of them, that are without, excluded from the Church. *If our Gospell be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the mindes of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospell of Christ*, &c. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. That Preaching which *Discipleth* men, *Mat.* 28. 19. Doth give them *Knowledg*, or else it could not give them Faith. For it *openeth their eyes and turneth them from darkness to light*, &c. Act. 26. 18. And surely we are *translated out of the power of darknesse into the Kingdome of Christ*, Col. 1. 14. *Those that in time past were not a people, but now are the people of the living God, are called out of darknesse into his marvellous light*, 1 Pet. 2 9, 10. *And what Communion hath light with darknesse, righteousnesse with unrighteousnesse, Christ with Beliall, the Believer with the Infi-*

dell, 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15, 16.

Object. *If Knowledg as such, were necessary to membership, then none could be a member without it: But that's not so.*

Answ. 1. *Knowledg* as such is necessary no otherwise, then Faith as such, and all one; you may therefore as well plead thus against the necessity of Faith. 2. And we grant that neither Knowledg, nor Faith, are necessary to uncapable Subjects, that is, in themselves. You know *Faith* in *Infants*, (such as *we* call Faith) is not necessary to their Justification; and yet will you say, it is not necessary to the Adult? The promise hath made it necessary to the Capable. 3. And we grant that neither Knowledg, nor Faith (justifying or dogmaticall) are necessary to the being of a visible Member, that is meerly such: God only seeth the heart. But yet the *appearance* or *profession* of Faith, and so of *Knowledge*, in the essentials of Christianity, is of necessity.

4. But though a personall Faith, or Knowledg, in truth or in profession, be not necessary to an Infant, either for Membership or Justification, yet their Parents Faith or Profession is necessary: or else the promise is to more, then Believers and their Seed, *quod restat probandum.*

Object.

Object. *But a Negative consent is sufficient, to continue such in Covenant, as before were admitted in Infancy, or at age: And this Negative consent, is but non-actuall dissent, or a non-renouncing of the Gospell: And therefore, as Positive consent, so actuall Faith and Knowledge, are not necessary.*

Answ. A dangerous doctrine! A negative consent is no consent. Why then should the ears of men be abused by the name, when there is nothing to answer it? A Negative Faith, in english is Infidelity, or not believing. Is not this a delusory teaching of the Church, to call unbelief by the name of Negative Faith, or Negative Consent? If a block, a bruit, or a Subject otherwise Naturally uncapable, be the Subject; then indeed it is inculpable, and your Negative Consent or Faith, is properly but a Negative dissent, or unbelief. But if a capable Should a man never thinke of God, Christ or Heaven, and so never have actuall dissent, he were yet an Atheist and Infidell: Much more when he *heareth*, and therefore must needs think of them: for then it is impossible, the will should neither dissent nor consent.

Faith is a positive being, and therefore must have a positive discovery: perhaps many a *Janizary* never renounced Christ in words, nor many another Childe of Christians, that is carried away, where they never heard of Christ.

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oblieged person be the Subject (which is our case) then your Negative consent is in english privative not consenting, and privative unbelief, or rejecting Christ. What a meanness is here to convey flat Infidels into the Church, or continue them there, under the Cloake of an abusive name! even by calling a non-dissenting conjunct with their Infidelity, or not consenting to the Covenant of grace, by the name of *Negative consent*. Were it a person that had entered at age, yet if he have afterward but your Negative consent, (which is neither to consent or dissent) he is an Apostate: And if he refuse consent, when called to it, by his lawfull governours, he gives occasion to be suspected of Apostacie, much more when he continueth to refuse consent, when so much of the life and practise of Christianity consisteth in it, and in the manifestation of it. But especially when persons were Baptized in Infancy, and never yet professed a Faith or Consent of their own. If that man that had no Faith but his Parents, (and his being a Believers seed, which *you* call Fœderall Faith) shall be continued at age a Member of the Church, by a not-actuall dissenting or renouncing Christ, by expresse words, then lets talk no more of a Church, nor abuse poor Heathens and Infidels so much as to question

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their salvation, or set them below us. But again, I answer you, that not consenting, is dissenting in the inward act; it is undoubted, that he that for one year, or moneth doth not consent, doth certainly dissent. There's no middle state between Believers and Infidels; Consenters, and Refusers. How shall they escape that *neglect* of so great salvation? Neglecting, and not consenting in a capable invited Subject is certain Infidelity: and therefore in the externall profession, we must judge accordingly. He that will not confess Christ, even in a Christian Church, and a peaceable age, deserves not to be called a Christian: He that is not for him is against him.

Object. *But Gods Covenant-people under the Law, were not only admitted without their voluntary consent or knowledg, but commanded to renue their Covenant in such a manner, as that they that were absent, and not in place to expresse consent, were included in those that were present.*

Answ. 1. None but Infants were admitted without consent: nor they without the consent of their Parents, naturall or civill, that had the power of disposing of them. 2. Those that were admitted upon others consent, were not continued at age without their own. 3. The Covenant, *Deut.* 29. 11, 12,

11, 12, 15. Was no mutuall Covenant to the absent or unborn there mentioned: but only a Covenant offered to the Nation, and conditionally made on Gods part as a promise, to them and their posterity, even to many generations: But those unborn generations, were not in Covenant on their parts, as promisers in the stipulation.

Object. *Wickedness it self doth not put a man out of the Visible Church. For a man is said to be cut off, but either* de jure, *or* de facto; *Meritoriously, or Effectually: the former is improperly called cutting off, being but the Desert of it: therefore if those baptized in Infancy, prove afterward wicked, they are not thereby cut off.*

Answ. 1. Such persons as we have in question, lose their Right and title by a Cessation, for want of that personal Condition, which the Covenant made Necessary to its continuance. So that we need not prove any other cutting off. 2. If he be but *Meritoriously* cut off, it is the Churches duty to do it *Sententially and Executively*; it being of indispensable obligation, to give to all their due. 3. It's granted that *Heresie* cuts off: But how doth *Heresie* cut off any otherwise then *Meritoriously?* If therefore *Wickedness* do as much as *Heresie*, then thus far they

they are equal. 4. Either *Wickedness* signifieth some actual crime like *Davids* or *Peters*, when the Church knoweth not whether it be joyned with *Habitual Impenitence*, or else it signifieth *Habitual stated Wickedness with impenitency*. The first sort requireth but an Exclusion from *Actual* Church-Communion, (called suspension by some) as it is but *Actual* sinne, that deserveth it. The second sort must have an Exclusion from their *State* and *Church-relation*, *as* it is a *State* of Impenitency, that deserveth it. The first sort of Excommunication, leaveth a man in the Church, *quoad Statum & Relationem*, but out of it *quoad actum & usum*: The The second sort leaves him out of it, both in *State* and *Act*. Not that the Excomunication puts him out of the Church, as Invisible: For that he did first himself meritoriously, and so efficiently; even by the efficiency of his demerits; as the Law of Christ did it, by its Obligatory efficiency: But when he hath put himself out of the Church invisible, and plainly declared this to the Church by his *impenitent courses*, the Church further declareth it by their *Sentence*, and puts him out of the Church *Visible executively*, when he had before, put out himself *meritoriously*. 5. As I said before, the persons *Wickedness*

is

is either *Notorious* and out of question, (as if a man be an open persecutour of godliness, or daily blaspheame God in the open streets, or Congregation, and many lower cases) or else it is *Controvertible*, needing proof, and *not notorious*. In the latter case a wicked man is not *Actually* cast out of the Communion of the Visible Church, or cut off from it, by his demerits, till his fault be proved, and sentence be passed. But in the former case he is Excommmunicate *ipso jure*, which is more then *de jure*. We call him excommunicate *de jure*, who *ought* to be excommucate nicate *de facto*: but we call him excommuni- *ipso jure*, which is *actually* excommunicated by the Law, without any further sentence of a Judge, the Law it self sufficing to enable men to the execution: so the Law of Christ commanding us to avoid and have no company with Drunkards, Adulterers, Hereticks, *&c.* if any be Notoriously such, past doubt, every man is obliged by this Law to avoid them in their several capacities, after the due admonitions given them, which the Law requireth, whether the Pastours censure them or no: but his censure layeth on them a double obligation.

Object. *If wickedness cut off a man, excommunication cannot do it, because it is done already.* *Answ.*

Anſw. If *wickedneſs* being *not Notorious* do only cut him off *meritoriouſly* and *de jure* only he be excommunicate, then *Actual* excommunication muſt do that which was not *actually* done, but *ought* to be done. But if by the *Notoriety* of the crime he be cut off *ipſo jure*, the *Sentence* yet may do the ſame thing, by adding a *Second Obligation* to the firſt. A Traitour in actual proſecution of the Soveraigne, ſeeking his life, is condemned *ipſo jure*, and any Subject may kill him without ſentence: and yet he may be proclaimed or ſentenced a Traitour for all that.

Object. *It is proved by ſome Writers, that ſuch perſons as have neither grace indeed nor inſhew, may yet have both a real and viſible Intereſt in the Covenant and Church: and the Arguments for this are yet unanſwered: therefore perſons baptized in Infancy are in the Church and Covenant at age, though they never by Profeſſion made ſo much as a ſhew of grace.*

Anſw. It was never proved by any Writer, nor ever will be, that any perſon at age, and natural capacity ought to be a member of the Church of Chriſt, under the Goſpel (no nor under

I would fully anſwer ſuch kind of Writings, but that judicious Readers are awery of ſuch contending, & think

it not worth the Readers time, or mine.

der the Law neither) without a shew of grace, even of Faith, by his Profession of consent to the Holy Covenant. It's the Arguments against them that remaine unanswered: But that all their Arguments, that I remember, are sufficiently answered, I shall take for granted, till I see a Reply. And for them that tell us of the Church-membership of the Adult, considered without Respect to saving Grace, I shall regard them, when they have proved, either that Faith and Repentance are no saving Graces; or that Profession of Faith hath no Respect to Faith; or that men may have Title to Church-membership, without respect to Profession of Faith; even of their Parents, if they are Infants; or their own, if at age. All these three points are yet unproved.

If any think the learned Mr. *Fullwood* to be of another mind, let them judg by his own words: Of the Visible Church, *cap.* 28, *pag.* 180. Saith he; *However I humbly conceive, though more then a bare historical faith should be requisite, yet less then a Faith that Just fieth (I do not say less than the Profession thereof) may truly entitle to Visible Church-membership* &c. mark the Parenthesis. And in his *Epist. Prepos.* 3. & 4. *From the Premi-*

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ſes it ſeems at leaſt probable to me, that the Church is to have ſome kind of reſpect unto the ſaving condition of the perſon Shee is about to admit into Communion, &c. 4. *Yet I humbly conceive that more then a bare outward Profeſſion is requiſite, to give real Intereſt in the Viſible Church, and the Priviledges thereof, before God; Though no more is requiſite to give viſible Intereſt before men*, &c. And for *Immediate right* to the Communion of the Church in the Lords Supper, he ſaith, *pag.* 270. *Where there is want of Knowledg (whether naturally or morally) there, we are ſure, the Condition of Right is wanting; and conſequently admiſſion is to be denied, when all is done.* And for the maine deſigne of this Book, he ſaith, *Append. pag.* 1, 2. (mentioning Mr. *Hanmer's* Book) *Some happily may be willing to ſurmiſe that our two Propoſitions are irreconcileable, and interpret me an enemy to that moſt ancient, uſefull, and deſireable Ordinance. Wherefore, if I may poſſibly prevent ſo ſcandalous a cenſure, I ſhall not venture to hold my Reader in ſo long ſuſpence, till he come to the pages, where Confirmation is conſidered in the Book; nor yet barely to acknowledg my allowance of it under my hand; but after my humble thanks heartily tendered to our worthy Author, for his*

excellent paines, in ſo ſeaſonable a Subject, I do alſo preſume earneſtly to beſeech my Reverend Bretheren, that what Mr. Baxter *hath ſo ſmartly preſſed upon the Miniſtry about it, may be ſpeedily and ſeriouſly conſidered, and undertaken by us.* And many pages after he addes 7. *Yea, though after all due paines and endeavoures uſed, we ſhould not be able to reconcile our principles in every point, yet if we can meet in the ſame practice about Confirmation, though on ſome ſmal differing grounds, why may not the Church be happily edified, and the peace thereof in a meaſure obtained, by ſuch an Unity, Uniformity in practice, while the perſons differing but in lighter matters, may waite upon the Lord in this good ſervice, for the great bleſſing of Unanimity, promiſed alſo?*

Object. *But he addeth the proviſo, that Confirmation be not thought to have any ingrediency into the nature or being of our membership: and that the temper of the people be found ſuch, as will admit of ſuch a change.*

Anſw. We ſhall eaſily grant, that *Confirmation*, as it is a ſolemn Reception of the perſon by Impoſition of hands, or without Impoſition in a purpoſed ſolemnity, commonly known by *that name*, is not of neceſſity to the Being of our membership: and

that

that all those that are received upon profession of Faith may be Church-members; and that the ordinary use of Christian Assemblies, and exercises of worship, is a *Profession*, though *obscure*; and that a baptized person that never was called to a Verball Profession, may be taken for a Christian, or Church-member, upon such a *Practical sort of Profession*, joyned with a not denying of Christ in word or life. But yet we are far from thinking that the Infant-Title-condition of such a one, serveth to prove his present Church-state and Title, now he is at capable age. The Infant-Title ceaseth, if he continue it not by a *Personal Profession at age*. And as there is no middle betweene Believers and unbelievers, so there is no such thing in a capable subject, as *non-dissenting*, in a moral sense, but true *Consenting*. It is not possible for the Soul to be neuter, when the thing is offered to our consent, but we must either will or nill, consent or dissent; though if it were, yet not willing, or not consenting, is Infidelity and Rebellion in such a Subject. And accordingly we maintaine, and *must maintaine*, that *Profession of some sort or other* is a necessary Condition of the Title and Church-state of the capable Adult, and of Right to the Priviledges: And as an *obscure*

kind of Profeſſion may ſerve (when a man is called to no more) to prove his Right, ſo a *clearer* ſort of Profeſſion is neceſſary to the clearer proof, and *ad bene eſſe Eccleſiæ.* And I have ſhewed what great and weighty Reaſons we have, to require an open, cleare, intelligible Profeſſion: And he that is juſtly called to for ſuch, giveth cauſe to the Church to queſtion him of Apoſtacy, if he refuſe without cauſe. So that of the three Conditions in queſtion, the firſt (which is our Infant-condition) is utterly inſufficient to the capable Adult: and the ſecond (which is an obſcure ſignification of our mind, by our Chriſtian practiſes) may ſerve *ad eſſe*, at leaſt when no more is required: and the third (which is an open approved Profeſſion by word or ſubſcription) is neceſſary ordinarily *ad bene eſſe.*

Thus farre we are agred: But what if we were not? Muſt we therefore refuſe to agree in the practice of the aforeſaid Confirmation? Will any good and peaceable man refuſe to joyne with thoſe that think it neceſſary to Adult Church-membership? If this opinion (of the ſaid Non-neceſſity) had been an Article of Faith, and among the neceſſary *Credenda* of the Church, we ſhould have had it in ſome Creed, or heard more of the neceſſity

ceſſity of it then we have done, from the Ancient Churches. If we meet about the *agenda* in our practice, let men take heed how they divide from ſuch as differ in the *Reaſons* of their Practice, till they can prove that they deny ſome Article of the Faith, which is of neceſſity to be believed.

And as for the peoples unfitneſs, or any diſturbance that will follow thereupon: 1. If there be ſuch a thing, it will be much long of the Miniſters: Let them unanimouſly agree, and they may do well enough with the people, or much the better. But when Miniſters themſelves are the bellows of faction, and think they can never ſufficiently vilifie diſſenters, and ſo have themſelves taught the people to take ſuch a Practice for a *Prelaticall foppery*, or *formality*, or for an *Independent rigidity* and *extreamity*; no wonder, if when they come to practice their duty, they meet with ſuch reproaches from the people, as they have taught them. 2. But ſuppoſe that people would diſturb us, that may in ſome caſes excuſe us, as to the *mode* of Confirmation, or Profeſſion: but no unfitneſs of the people can excuſe us, as to the *ſubſtance* of the duty; the requiring and approving their Profeſſion. We are falſe to our truſt, and the Church of God, if to avoid diſturbance,

we will confound Believers and Infidels, and destroy the nature of the Church and Ordinances, under pretence of the peoples good.

Object. *But it would be your only sure and happy course to exercise Discipline upon all that are baptized in their Infancy; whether at age they consent or no: And finding them in the Church, you must do so.*

Answ. I have said enough to this before. Have they that talk thus, *tried* this course, or have they not? If they have not, we will beare with them as well meaning men, that talk of what they never tryed; as we would do with a confident man, that would condemn the actions of Souldiours and Seamen, that himself was never in at warres, nor at Sea. But if they have tryed it, what kind of Discipline do they exercise? Would they make us believe, that they are able in a Parish of 4000, or 5000, or 6000 Souls, to exercise the Discipline mentioned in Scripture, and the Canons of the Ancient Churches, and that upon such persons, as our Parishes commonly consist of? I know they cannot do it: I have had tryall to tell me what a man can do. With the help of divers Ministers, and many hundred godly people, to watch over others, and promote this work, I am

not

not able to do it on all this Pariſh, if I might. There is ſo many offendours weekely to be dealt with, and ſo much time required to heare witneſſes, and admoniſh them, that it's more then I could poſſibly do. How Biſhops deale with Dioceſſes, let them ſee themſelves. And if we could do it, yet the people will not conſent If you ſend for them, they will not come neer you: If you admoniſh them in the Congregation by name, they will have an Action at Law againſt you, if they can? How ever, you will have ſuch a multitude enraged by the exerciſe of Diſcipline, if it be faithfully (though never ſo tenderly done) that the Church will be in a flame, and your Miniſtry hated, and the people undone, as I have before declared. So that it is but a *name* of Diſcipline, to the deſtruction of diſcipline, that this Objection pleadeth for; or elſe it diſhonoureth it ſelf and the Authors.

And as they do by Diſcipline, ſo they do by Chriſtian Charity, which is a greater thing. Of old, the Viſible members of the Church were the Objects of brotherly Chriſtian Love: And ſo as they ſeemed to them to be Believers and penitent perſons, the living members did love all the body with that ſpecial Love, that was the matter of

the new Commandment, and proved them to be Christ's Disciples. No man knew the hearts of others, and therefore knew not whom to Love as Christians infallibly discerned. But the Profession of Saving Faith and Holiness, being then (and ever) the test of Adult-members, they took all the members of the Visible Church as credibly of the invisible; though with different degrees of Credibility. And accordingly they loved them all, with a Christian special Love, of the same species, though with different degrees of that Love. Whereas this Popish new found trick, of making a new common sort of Faith, and Visible membership, that hath no respect to saving Faith, doth teach all Christians, to Love the members of the Visible Church, but with a common love; and relieve and help them, but with a common Charity. And so the device is to confine our special Brotherly Love and Charity, to a corner of the Visible Church; to a few, whom we will please to think to be godly.

I have oft marvelled in observing some Learned Divines, that bend that way, that they think compassion, and Christian Charity is on their side. What Charity can their Doctrine glory of? They will be so merci-

full

full to Infidels, that are uncapable of a Church-state, as to plead them into the Church; and when they are there, they leave them under the curse, and in a state of damnation in their own judgments; teaching us to judge uncharitably, of the Visible Church in general for their sakes; and to look on them as without respect to any saving grace, and so without any special Love. A cold comfort! to bring them into no more capacity of Gods Mercy, nor of our Charity; but into much more capacity of aggravated damnation: which they might better have prevented by being kept in their proper station, till they were capable of more. I confess (though my belief of mens Profession, have different degrees, as I see in them different degrees of Credibility) yet I have Charitabler thoughts of the members of the Visible Church, then these that make so low and miserable a description of them. And though I know that there are abundance among them, that are Hypocrites, and unsanctified, yet know I none but Saints and Hypocrites, that are tolerable in the Church; nor will I accuse particular persons of Hypocrisie, till I have cause. Neither in my secret, or open censures, will I pluck up the tares upon any such terms, as will not stand with

with the ſafety of the wheate, but rather let them grow together in my eſteeme in the Church, till the time of harveſt. And that I may think charitably of the Church, and walk charitably in, and towards it, therefore I would not have it conſiſt of ſuch notorious, ungodly, or heretical men, as are uncapable objects of Chriſtian, Brotherly Love. For Hereſie, the foreſaid learned Brother tells us, that it cuts men off from the Church. I ſay ſo to (meritoriouſly at leaſt) if by Hereſie be meant the excluſion of any eſſential Article of the Chriſtian Faith: But *pag.* 199, where he ſaith, *the Controverſie may be eaſily ended, by parting ſtakes*: viz. *that ſome Hereſie, which abſolutely denyeth ſome particular fundamental truth, and taketh up ſome one, or few ſtones thereof, is conſiſtent with Church intereſt: and other Hereſie, which raiſeth up the very foundation of Religion, denying moſt, or the moſt chief, if not all of the Articles of our Chriſtian Faith, is inconſiſtent therewith.* I muſt humbly, but very confidently ſay, that this anſwer will not ſerve the turne. If by *Fundamentals*, be meant (as commonly) the Eſſential Articles of Chriſtian Faith, then the abſolute denying of any one Article, doth prove that perſon to be no Chriſtian, nor capable

of

of a Church state: For the form is wanting, where any Essential part is wanting. But if any thing else be meant by *Fundamentals*, no man can decide the Controvesie by it, till it be known what it is: And it will be hard to fasten it on any thing, where the absolute denyal of many points shall unchurch, and the absolute denial of one or two points of the same rank and kind not *do it*. Saith he *p.* 198. *The Jews held that an heretical Isralite, had no communion with the Church of Israel: and why? but because Communion supposeth union; and union with Israel, or the true Church, is lost with Faith: They also held,* (*as* Selden *noteth*) *that an Israelite turning an Heretike* i. e. *denying any of the thirteene fundamental Articles, to be as an Heathen man.* And a few lines before, he saith, that *historical Faith, which hath the Doctrine of Faith for its Object, none do doubt to be an Essential, requisite to a true Church-member.* Yet that with me is a Visible member, that hath not this much, which is said to be *Essential, no man doubting of it.* If they Profess true Faith, though they are stark Atheists at the heart, and have not so much as historical Faith, I shall believe them, till they nullifie their own Profession: But if they profess not also to consent

sent to have Christ to be their Saviour, I shall not take it for a *Profession* of Christianity.

Certain I am, that the ancient Doctours with one consent, did look on the baptized generally as pardoned, justified, and adopted; and therefore thought that Visible Church-membership, did imply a credibility (at least) of a state of saving grace. Saith *Cyprian*, *Epist.* 76. *Magn. In Baptismo unicuique peccata sua remittuntur.* And upon this supposition run the Arguments of the councell of *Carthage*, and *Firmilian*, *Epist.* ibid.

Saith Augustine, *De Catechizandis rudibus*, cap. 26. *His dictis interrogandus est, an hæc credat, atque observare desideret? Quod cum responderit, solemniter utique signandus est, & ecclesiæ more tractandus.* Obedience it self was promised, and a consent to it professed before Baptism then, and ever since Christian Baptism was known.

Idem Epistol. 119. *Ad Januar. cap.* 2. *Secundum hanc fidem & spem & dilectionem, quâ cæpimus esse sub gratia, jam commortui sumus cum Christo, & consepulti per baptismum in morte*, &c. Bap-

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tism then supposeth credibly Faith, Hope and Love.

Idem Epist. 23. Having shewed why Parents Faith profiteth Infants, and yet their after-sins hurt them not, saith *Cum autem homo sapere cæperit, non illud Sacramentum repetit, sed intelligit: ejusque veritati consonâ etiam voluntate coaptabitur. Hoc quamdiu non potest* (N. B.) *valebit Sacramentum ad ejus tutelam adversus contrarias potestates: & tantum valebit, utsi ante rationis usum ex hac vita emigraverit, per ipsum Sacramentum Ecclesiæ charitate ab illa condemnatione, quæ per unum hominem intravit in mundum, Christiano adjutorio liberetur. Hoc qui non credit, & fieri non posse arbitratur, profecto infidelis est, etsi habeat fidei Sacramentum, longeque melior est ille parvulus, qui etiamsi fidem nondum habeat in cogitatione, non ei tamen obicem contrariæ cogitationis opponit, undè Sacramentum ejus salubriter percipit.*

And saith the Synod of *Dort. Artic.* 1. 8. 17. *Quandoquidem de voluntate Dei ex verbo ipsius nobis est judicandum, quod testatur liberos fidelium, esse sanctos, non quidem naturâ, sed beneficio fœderis*

fœderis gratuiti, in quo illi cum parentibus comprehenduntur, pij parentes de electione & salute suorum liberorum, quos Deus in Infantia ex hac vita evocat, dubitare non debent. And if there be such certainty of the Election and Salvation of all such Infants of the godly, as ought to exclude all doubting, surely the visible Church-state of the Adult also, hath some respect to saving grace, so farre as that its credible *fide humanâ* that such have saving Faith.

And saith Mr *Fullwood*, Append. *p.* 6. *I conceive that such an ones personall profession in his generall owning the true Faith, and usuall attending Gods publick worship, doth superadde a kinde of new right, and mingle it with such a persons former right, had by his Birth priviledge.* And if the [new Right] be not a *necessary Right*, I think it will prove *no right*.

I will contend with no man whether the approved profession which I have pleaded for in this book, be the very same thing with the Ancients confirmation. I have given you my thoughts of it, and I am sure the thing in question

queſtion is our duty, and the name not unfit, and that its the ſame with the Confirmation owned by the Divines of the reformed Churches, and particularly with that eſtabliſhed and recommended in the Book of Common-Prayer, here in *England*, for the ſubſtance.

I ſhall conclude with this ſerious requeſt to my Brethren, ſeconded with weighty reaſons. Even that they would take heed of both extreams in their judging of Church-members, and managing the Diſcipline and Ordinances of Chriſt. 1. Should we be ſo looſe as to caſt out Diſcipline, or ſettle the Churches either with ſuch materials for quality, or quantity, as that it ſhall be uncapable of Diſcipline, we ſhall never be able to anſwer it to Chriſt. And ſhould we make a new qualification of Adult Church-members, even their Infant-Title-condition alone, or the profeſſion of a Faith that is not ſaving, we ſhould come too neere the making of a new Baptiſm, and Church. And truly if we do but ſlubber over the buſineſs, and to avoid offence or trouble to our ſelves, ſhould take up with a profeſſion

I am ſenſible alſo how the

utterly

arguments for both extreams do either drive or draw the Reader to the *Anabaptists.*

utterly incredible, especially in these times when we have so much liberty and countenance from the Magistrate, for a fuller Reformation; we shall be guilty of so much injury to the Church, and the Christian name, and our people souls; as is little considered by many that have their eye only on the contrary extreame, as if there were no danger but on one side.

2. On the other side, if we go so rigidly and unrighteously to work, as some men are bent to do; we may accomplish those ends, that we are endeavouring to overthrow, and frustrate our own, which we think to attain. If we will reject the Scripture-ancient-Character or Evidence of Title to Church-priviledges, even a *credible profession of Christianity*, we shall confound our selves, and trouble the Church, and be at a losse for a certain Evidence, and never know what ground to rest upon. And we shall injure the souls of multitudes of true Believers, and keep out those, that Christ will entertain. For there are no other terms, besides

taking

taking mens profession, by a humane Faith, on which we can admit persons, without excluding multitudes, that should not be excluded. I doubt many Ministers, that have had a more ingenuous education themselves, are not sufficiently sensible of the great disadvantage, that Countrey People are under, by their want of such Education. Many that are bred where holy discourse is strange, and never were used to any thing of that nature, no nor to common Urbanity of speech, or behaviour, may be brought to hearty sorrow for sinne, and desires after Christ and Grace, long before they can expresse their knowledg, or desires, in any such manner, as some men do expect. Many gracious souls (as farre as I can discerne) I have met with, that never were noted for any thing extraordinary in Religion, though they lived among such. I had rather let in many, that are unregenerate, into the Church, then keep out one that's a true Believer, if there be no other remedy. The Lord Jesus that died for them, and sent the Ministery for them, and will at last admit them into

Heaven, will give us little thanks, for excluding his weakest Members from the Church, and from the use of the Sacrament and Communion of Saints, who have most need of them, of any that have right to them. For my part, I desire not, nor dare be guilty of that way of Government in the Church, as shall grieve those that Christ would not have grieved, and exclude the weak, and turne or keep out the Infants in Grace, from the Family of the Lord. A compassionate Minister is likest to Christ, that will not break the bruised reed. How dealt he with the woman taken in adultery? How tenderly excuseth he the sluggishnesse of his Disciples, that could not watch and pray with him one houre, in his last extreamity, with *the Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak?* when many now that think well of themselves would almost excommunicate men for as small a fault; We know not in such cases, what Spirit we are of.

But this is not all: I must confesse Brethren (which I beseech you patiently to hear) these three things very much stick upon my thoughts. 1. I cannot but

but obſerve, how many eminent Profeſſors of Piety have miſcarried, and grievouſly miſcarried of late, when ſome of lower Profeſſions have ſtood faſt. And I think God ſuffers the falls of many of his own, to let them know the frailty of our natures, and cauſe them to be compaſſionate to others. And ſome cenſorious mens hearts might ſmite them, if they had heard from their Maſter, *Let him that is faultleſs, caſt the firſt ſtone.*

2. And it ſticks very much upon my thoughts, how ſmall a handfull the cenſorious way would reduce the Catholike Church of Chriſt to. When it is but about the ſixth part of the world that are at all Baptized Chriſtians; and ſcarce the ſixth part of them, that are *Proteſtants*; and of the *Proteſtants*, ſo few, except in *England*, that are ſo qualified for holineſs, as in your admiſſions you exſpect: and in *England* how ſmall is the number

The moſt experienced holy of my flock are very tender of the ſcandalous themſelves, and would not have me to caſt them out while there appeareth any preſent hope: remembring the condition that once they were themſelves in, and their failings after convictions, and what had become of them if then they had been caſt out.

that you would admit, I am deeply afraid lest you hainously injure the Cause of Christ, by your excessive rigor: and lest confining even the visible Church into so exceeding small a compass, should tempt men to infidelity. For he that to day can believe, that Christ died not for one of a hundred thousand in the world, may to morrow believe, that he died for none at all. I hope the little flock of the Elect, is not so little, as some would have the visible Church of the called.

3. We are deeply sensible of the increase of Infidels here in *England*. They are too thick about us, under severall garbs, especially under the maske of Seekers; and are perswading people against the Christian Faith, and truth of Scripture, and the life to come: and so much do these Apostates now abound, that we have reason to be jealous of them. And if any of you should strike in with good men, that are of this censorious over rigorous way, consider how farre they may make use of such to accomplish their designs. If by you they can get almost all the world un-

un-Churched in estimation; and fifty for one, if not an hundred for one in *England*, actually un-Christened, and their children after them left unbaptized: what will follow? I doubt this, if God should not save us from your miscarriages, When there is but one of an hundred in all the Land, that is a Christian, the rest will want neither malice, nor power, to put an end here to the Christian name; or at least to the liberty and glory of Christianity. They may choose our Parliaments for us, and in a word, do with us what they list, when they are exasperated to the greatest hatred of us; and cut off our liberties, and set up Infidelity or Heathenism by a Law. I trust God will never suffer this: But let us take heed of gratifying Infidels, and casting all our safety upon miracles, lest we be found to be but foolish builders, and tempters of God: still you may find that over-doing is the most effectuall undoing. And if you would find out the most dangerous enemies of the Gospell, look for them among those, that seem over zealous against the enemies of the Gospell, and seem to over-doe in the work of

the Goſpell, I deſire to bring no party of godly men into ſuſpicion, or odium by this: but indeed I deſire to countermine the Apoſtates; and it would be the moſt amazing confounding thing, that could befall us in this world, if we ſhould ſee the Church of God betraied into the hands of Infidels, and the Goſpell loſt, by the indiſcreet and inconſiderate overdoing of thoſe well-meaning men, that did the work of Infidels, and ungodly men for them, while they thought that none were ſo much againſt them. If the neck of Religion be broken among us, I am afraid the imprudent will be ſome cauſe, that would lead us above the top of the Ladder.

Sure I am between you both, you have the eaſieſt way to the fleſh, that run into extreams. Durſt I caſt off Diſcipline, and only preach, and pleaſe all the pariſh in Sacraments and other Ordinances, how eaſie a life ſhould I have to the fleſh? And if I durſt take out one of a hundred, that are eminent in Piety, that will ſcarce ever call me to any penall acts of Diſcipline, I ſhould have a much more eaſie life then the former.

But

But they are both so easie, that I the more suspect them, to be the fruit of the wisdome of the flesh. Indeed, both the extreames do cast off Discipline, for the most part, whatever they pretend. One sort never meane to exercise it: And the other sort extoll it; and when they have done, they separate a few of the best that are like to have no need of the troublesome part of it, and so sit down without the exercise of it; pretending to be Physicians, but refusing to receive the sick into their Hospitals. Brethren, I speake not as an accuser, but a Monitour, and shall continue to pray for the Churches Purity and Peace, while I am

R. B.

July, 1658.

D. H. Ham.

Dr H. Hammond, *in his view of the Direct.* §. 41. p. 45, 46. *For Confirmation, which being ſo long and ſo ſcandalouſly neglected in this Kingdome (though the Rule have alſo been ſevere, and carefull in requiring it) will now not ſo eaſily be digeſted, having thoſe vulgar prejudices againſt it; yet muſt I moſt ſolemnly profeſs my opinion of it; That it is a moſt ancient Chriſtian Cuſtome, tending very much to Edification: which I ſhall make good by giving you this view of the manner of it. It is this; that every Rector of any Pariſh, or Curate of charge, ſhould by a Familiar way of Chatechizing, inſtruct the Youth of both Sexes within his Cure, in the Principles of Religion, ſo farre that every one of them before the uſuall time of coming to the Lords-Supper, ſhould be able to underſtand the particulars of that vow, made in Baptiſm, for the* Credenda

and

and Facienda; *yea and* Fugienda *also: what must be* Believed, *what* done, *and what* forsaken; *and be able to give an intelligent account of every one of these: which being done, every such Childe so prepared, ought to be brought to the* Bp *for Confirmation. Wherein the intent is, that every such Child, attain'd to years of Understanding, shall singly and solemnly before God, the* Bp, *and the whole Congregation, with his own consent, take upon himself the Obligation to that, which his God-Fathers and God-Mothers in Baptism, promised in his Name; and before all those Reverend Witnesses, make a Firm, Publick, Renued promise, that by Gods help he will Faithfully endeavour, to discharge that Obligation in every point of it, and persevere in it all the dayes of his life. Which resolution and promise so heightned with all those solemnities, will in any reason have a mighty*

ty impression on the Child, and an influence on his actions for ever after. And this being thus performed by him, the Br shall severally impose his hands on every such Child (a ceremony used to this purpose by Christ himself) and bless and pray for him, that now, that the Temptations of sinne begin more strongly in respect of his age, to assault him, he may receive Grace and Strength against all such Temptations or Assaults, by way of prevention and speciall assistance; without which, obtained by Prayer from God, he will never be able to do it. This is the Sum of Confirmation; and were it rightly observed (and no man admitted to the Lords Table, that had not thus taken the Baptisme-Bond from the Sureties into his own Name; and no man after that, suffered to continue in the Church, which brake it wilfully; but turned out of those Sacred Courts by the

power

power of the keys in Excommunication) It would certainly prove by the Blessing of God, were it begun, a most effectuall meanes to keep men (at least within some terms of Christian civility, (from fallings into open Enormious sinnes; and that the defaming and casting out of this so blameleſſe gainfull order, would be necessary or usefull to any policy, save only to defend the Devill from so great a blow, and to sustaine and uphold his Kingdome, I never had yet any Temptation or Motive to suspect or imagine. Instead of considering any Objections of the adversary against this piece, whether of Apostolicall or Ecclesiasticall Discipline (which I never heard with any colour produced) I shall rather expres my most passionate wish unto my friends, those who sincerely wish the good of this Nationall Church, that they will endeavour their uttermost to revive

these

these meanes of regaining of purity and exemplary lives of all its members, when God by restoring our peace shall open a doore for it.

FINIS.

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